

LETTERS

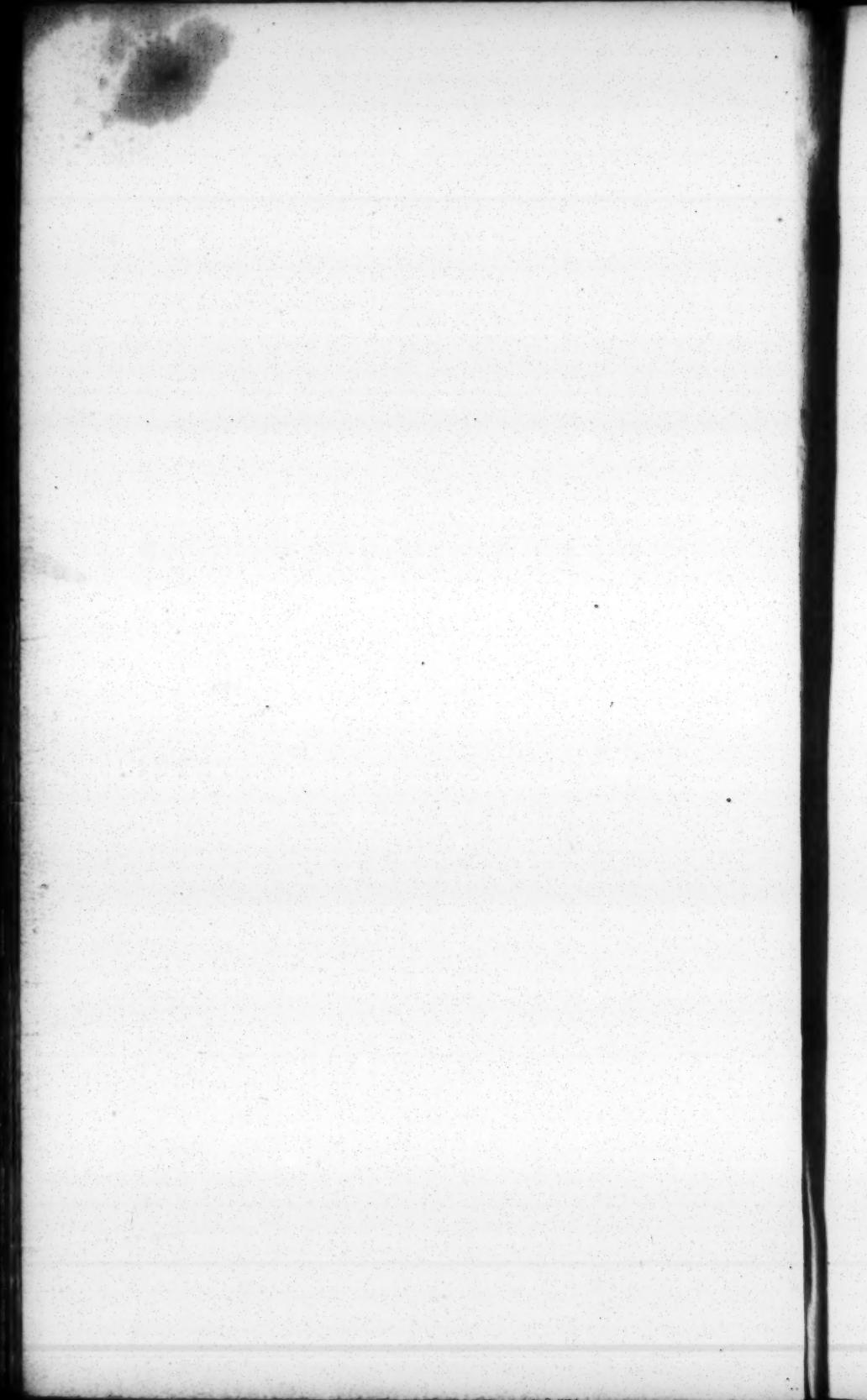
FROM

ELIZABETH SOPHIA DE VALIERE

To her Friend

LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

VOL. I.



LETTERS

FROM

ELIZABETH SOPHIA DE VALIERE

TO HER FRIEND

LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

BY

MADAM RICCOBONI.

Translated from the FRENCH by

MR. MACEUEN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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LETTERS

M. FROM *Westmore*

ELIZABETH SOPHIA DE VALIERE

To her Friend

LOUISA HORTENSIA DE CANTELEU.

LETTER I.

MY silence alarms; afflicts you! It cannot be otherwise. During these last ten days, I have continually attempted to write to you, but the oppression of my heart, the abundance of my tears—O my dear Hortensia, your friend is no longer in the situation in which you left her; no longer the niece of a woman universally respected, the declared heiress to an ample fortune: protected by none, without relations, without support, she is nothing, possesses nothing, hopes for nothing.

Have you been informed of the death of Madam d'Auterive? Do you know that

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I have



I have lost my only protectress? That I have now no asylum, no certain place of retreat? Unknown every where, a stranger, poor and forsaken of all; I have already experienced the extreme humiliation inseparable from misery; and I have seen my own exposed to the eyes of the whole world.

My dear, my sincere friend, why are we so cruelly separated? What must become of me? Whither shall I betake myself? Who will condescend to direct my steps, and assist me to settle my wavering mind? Left to myself, obliged to provide for my own subsistence, I am at a loss what method to pursue to procure me the necessaries of life: my youth and inexperience alarm me; I feel myself seized with unusual terror, which makes me dread a world where I must wander without council or direction. Alone interested in the preservation of a being unconnected with every other, I tremble at the danger—I cannot think,—reflect. In vain I strive—I have no power but to weep.

Six in the Morning.

I have just read your letter over again. I see you are ignorant of my loss and misfortune.

fortune. You speak to me of my Aunt, good God! Had I ever one? Madam d'Auterive, who reared my Infancy with such a tender care, with so much gentleness, and goodness! Madam d'Auterive—Oh! my heart is ready to break—is no more.

On Monday, the fifteenth of this month, she was torn from me, nor did any disorder, complaint or accident, warn us of our approaching misfortune. She enjoyed perfect health; was gay, good humoured and happy: all about her partook of her happiness. God all powerful—forgive me—I weep, I murmur not.

O my dear companion! You whom I have loved from my earliest years; you whose absence made me feel the first pangs of grief, continue to love me. In all this wide world your friendship is the only treasure left to the sad, to the unfortunate Sophia.

In the superscription of your letters, instead of Saint-Aulay, write la Valiere; and direct them to be left at Madam d'Auterive's. Pauline will take care to deliver them to me.

LETTER II.

YOU tell me, dearest Hortensia, that the tenderest sentiments may be mingled with bitterness: though it is the sweetest comfort to unburden our grief into the bosom of a friend, it is sad we cannot do it without afflicting that friend. For heaven's sake do not give way to so much sorrow, for not being able to assist me or to afford me a safe retreat—Cease then to alarm your own imagination, and pity the danger to which my forlorn condition, and my poverty expose me; weep no longer for me. I but just now broke out into shrieks and moans at your kind expressions, which add to my sorrows—they have awakened my fears and my apprehensions.

You ask me to explain the words a stranger and unknown? That I can but too easily do. I am not the daughter of that niece of Madam d'Auterive who died in Holland. The Marchioness de Germueil, sister to that lady, is not my aunt; I have enjoyed full seventeen years, the rank and name of Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay, who came into the world three days before me,

me, and died the fourth day after I was born. A paper written by the hand of Madam d'Auterive, and read in the presence of the relations, of a magistrate and his officers, has laid open this surprising secret, so long and so religiously kept, and of which no one ever entertained the smallest suspicion. Mr. Smith her correspondent at Amsterdam, and Pauline her oldest chamber-maid, were alone in the secret. This girl attended her into Holland; where she was witness to the adventure which excited the compassion of her mistress.

I here subjoin a copy of that paper. It will inform you, my dear, of the singular and unfortunate story of your friend,

*Copy of a Paper found after the death of
Madam d'Auterive, in one of the corner
Japan Cabinets in the Saloon.*

EIGHTEEN months after the death of M. d'Auterive, in the year 17**, finding myself possessed of a considerable fortune, I left off commerce and banking, closed my accounts, and about the middle of April determined on a journey to Holland, to visit several of my correspondents, liquidate part of my capital, and take pro-

per measures for the recovery of the remainder.

These apparent reasons served to conceal from the eyes of my family a tender motive of compassion, which they might have blamed, without being able in the least to weaken it; by this means, I avoided many unnecessary debates. Madam de Saint-Aulay, my niece, then lived at Amsterdam. I had always loved her: her submissive letters, her solicitations, her misfortune, prevailed with me not to imitate the severity of my brother, justly irritated at her marrying a Protestant, at her flight into Holland, and at the report that she was going to embrace the religion of her husband.

Disinherited, forsaken by all her relations, to compleat her misfortune, she lost that husband, whose tenderness and affection made amends for all she had sacrificed to love. M. de Saint-Aulay died the second year after their marriage, leaving my niece on the eve of being a mother, overwhelmed with grief and in a very deplorable situation.

Determined to forgive her a wrong step, which I believed had been too severely punished, I consented to bring her home to my house, and to take care of her: I previously

previously informed her of my setting out from Paris, of the time when I should be with her, with the determination of my affairs in the several cities to which they had carried me; I went, as I had promised, to Amsterdam. Alighting at my niece's, I learned to my great surprize and affliction, that she had that moment expired in labour, being delivered of a girl, weakly, delicate, tormented with violent convulsions, so that she seemed every moment as if she would have followed her unhappy mother.

Not caring to pass the night in a house filled with mourning and sadness, I sent to M. Smith my old friend and correspondent. He was in the country, whence he was expected home the next day. Being unacquainted both with his daughters and their husbands, I resolved on going to the principal inn; whither I carried the child and its nurse. I asked whether they could get me something for supper: it was now six in the evening, and I had eat nothing the whole day. I made my chamber-maid and wet-nurse sit down at table; I looked on, overwhelmed with sad reflections, when all on a sudden repeated and piercing shrieks made me start from my seat: I thought the house was on fire; I hastily

quitted the room, and running to the end of a pretty long gallery, where a number of people assembled attracted me, I saw a man about twenty, stretched on the ground, pale and bloody, his eyes closed, breathless, and the blood no longer streaming from his wound. A beautiful charming young woman on her knees held up his head, bathed his face with hers, strove to bring him to life, and losing all hopes of his recovery, abandoned herself to shrieks and moans, and to every expression of a grief so violent, that overpowered by its excess, this enchanting creature fell motionless on the already cold bosom of him whose loss occasioned her sorrows. She was carried to bed : I followed her : I did what I could to assist her : I immediately dispatched a person in quest of one whose art might give her ease. They brought a surgeon ; the people of the house assured me he was a very expert one : after considering attentively the young lady who had swooned away, he seemed in doubt whether she yet breathed : he opened a vein ; she came to herself a little, several times cried out in English, Heavens, O Heavens ! and relapsed into her former condition. They recovered her a second time ; she then cast a mournful look on all

all about her, and fixing her eyes on me, joining her trembling hands, and lifting them up towards heaven, threw herself into my arms, crying out, he is dead, he is dead! and closed her eyes for ever.

Her cruel end did not put a period to these tragic events: a child, in appearance condemned never to behold the light, was on the point of perishing in the womb of its unhappy mother. The surgeon undertook to save it by an operation, the sight of which I found myself unable to endure. To strengthen his zeal, I promised him an handsome gratification, and quitted the room that he might be at liberty to proceed to do his office.

I with difficulty got through the crowd that filled this sorrowful place; the whole family, with many more from the neighbourhood, were assembled on the occasion. The object the surgeon had in view, the operation he was going to perform, drew about him, the landlady, her women, servants, in short all that could get near him. As I was returning to my chamber, I perceived a man on the middle of the stairs; he asked me in French, whether the lady that had fainted away had come to herself, and how she was? Alas, said I to him, she is dead; she this moment expired in my

arms. The man cried out aloud, repeating it several times, my master, my poor master; he went down again precipitately, and instantly disappeared.

I called, I would have had him pursued, and arrested; no body made me any answer. I had no man servant, having left my own sick at the house of one of my correspondents. Could the man have been seized, he would have doubtless afforded some light into an adventure, which it is possible may always remain an impenetrable secret.

As the promise I made him convinced the surgeon that I must needs interest myself in the success of his operation, he made haste to bring me the infant he had just extracted from the body of its unhappy mother. From the observations he made, he concluded it must have come into the world two months before its time. It was a girl. Never did object pierce my heart with so strong and so tender sentiments of compassion: its feeble cries brought tears into my eyes: I took her, and lifting her up towards heaven, I fervently prayed that the Almighty would preserve and bless this innocent creature, saved from an untimely death, bereft of its natural protectors, abandoned even before it was born,

to

to the fatherly care of his ever watchful Providence.

Whilst I caused the child to be wrapped in some of the swaddling clothes of little Saint-Aulay, an extreme confusion reigned throughout the house. The officers of justice were arrived, and the doors were all shut. They examined all those who had been witnesses to the death of these two persons. They collected but few facts: these communicated no light with regard to the names or condition of those unhappy strangers. By their dress, and their language, they appeared to be English. The murderer too seemed of the same nation. The Frenchman who had spoken to me, probably belonged to one deeply interested in the life of her, concerning whose health he had been sent to inquire. The whole of their depositions were reduced to the following narrative, extracted and translated by myself from an information extremely long and diffuse.

*Extract from the examination taken before
the Dutch Magistrates.*

MONDAY, 6th June 17**, in the dusk of the evening the stranger, whose name and country are to us unknown,

known, arrived, accompanied by a sailor, who carried nothing besides a large *sac de nuit* *. The stranger paid the porter very generously, and dismissed him when he entered the house.

He went over all the apartments, pitched upon two, agreed for the price and gave earnest: he spoke pretty good Dutch, seemed very uneasy and impatient, was for ever going to the port, bespoke the best provisions the house afforded, hardly eat any thing, went to bed late, and rose at day break.

Sunday the 12th the lady who just now expired arrived about eleven in the morning, carrying in her hand a very small bundle tied up in a cambric handkerchief; she enquired for the stranger, described him by his stature, the colour of his hair and clothes, but never named him. She expressed herself with much difficulty in Dutch; as they were answering her questions, the person she sought after returned; he perceived her, cried out for joy, flew to her, pressed her to his bosom, repeating, my wife, my friend, my beloved companion, what have I suffered during

* A bag to hold a few things more immediately necessary on a journey, as shirts, &c.

your

your absence! and accosting the mistress of the inn, said, this is my wife, whom I so impatiently waited for, now she is come, I am completely blest.

The young lady was conducted to the apartment appointed for her: seeing her fatigued, her husband begged her to take some rest: she consented: he went out, the landlady undressed her, and put her to bed. Two hours afterwards she brought her tea, which she made for her: whilst she was drinking it, her husband returned: he seemed charmed to see her; he beheld her with looks of silent contemplation; the landlady fearing to be troublesome quitted the room.

The young lady rose late: her husband and she dined at five. She eat nothing; sighed, wept, and seemed overwhelmed with grief. The maids who waited at table, heard her husband speak to her in a passionate tone of voice, afterwards in a tender, endearing, and even submissive accent, and presently after he would fall into a passion again. They did not understand their discourse, but conjectured he was displeased at her sighs and tears. The astonishing beauty of this lady, her sweetness of temper, her modesty, the noble air diffused over her own person, and her deep

deep melancholy, interested and moved every one in her favour: they were never weary with gazing at her; she engaged their whole attention; they strove who should enjoy the pleasing pre-eminence of approaching and waiting on her.

This day, Wednesday the fifteenth, between five and six in the evening, her husband came down: he was ready to go out; seeing the landlady in the court-yard, where she was at work with two of her daughters; he told her she might dispose of his apartment towards the middle of the following week; that his lady's maid and his baggage were soon to arrive; that he was to embark on the Monday or Tuesday at farthest: he added, that he should go to the post-office in hopes of finding a letter of consequence; but that should he not receive it, no alteration would be made in his measures. He was still speaking, when a man in an English dress, about six and twenty, and of a noble appearance, presented himself at the gate. On perceiving him, the young lady's husband seemed surprized and vexed: he turned pale; made up to him and seemed as if he would oppose his entrance; both spoke a language unknown to those who heard them. Their discourse was exceeding

ing

ing short: they went out together; and were seen to turn down towards the *Canal du Prince* *.

Probably the lady who discovered so much anxiety observed them from her window: the instant they disappeared, she shrieked aloud: the landlady went to her chamber, found her on her knees, pale, trembling, her hands lifted up; she wept, groaned, implored every power above: agitated, distracted, beside herself; she rose up, attempted to walk, go down stairs, and to run after the two persons, for both of whom she seemed equally to interest herself; she fell without strength or motion. The landlady made her smell to salts; scarce had she recovered her spirits, when a young man, a servant of the inn, assisted by several men belonging to the place, brought back her husband, who had been run through the body with a sword, which probably had entered his heart, for he was already without heat or respiration.

This servant, who had been sent on an errand into a street at the end of the *Canal du Prince*, returning thence, perceived the gentleman with his sword drawn, and saw him drop: his antagonist far from flying,

* The name of a street.

expressed

expressed evident signs of extreme sorrow, and leaning over him, strove to assist him; two men came up to him, and laying hold of him, forcibly carried him off, and put him on board a boat, which shot out of sight like an arrow. On approaching the wounded man, the waiter knew him; and thinking he was only in a swoon, immediately called for assistance, and had him carried to his inn.

This was all they were able to learn. This was the sum of what fourteen witnesses deposed. There was not a paper found about the two unfortunate persons capable of affording the least information. A small quantity of exceeding fine linen, their dress neat but simple, as the dress of travellers usually is, two gold watches of tolerable rich workmanship, sixty guineas, forty louis d'ors with some other pieces of French coin, remained in the hands of the officers of the Republic; the husband and wife were buried at my expence; I undertook to bring up and, when required, to produce the child born under such fatal auspices: I deposited the value, and gave my receipt for a miniature picture mounted in gold, and set round with diamonds: I myself had taken it from the finger of the dying lady during her first swoon, with a gold

gold ring, which to me seemed a wedding ring. I had forgot both till after the inventory of their effects had been made. I was permitted to retain these valuable tokens for the poor orphan: I held her over the font with M. Smith, who came that very evening from the country: I named her Elizabeth Sophia de Valiere, from a manor which belonged to me. The honest surgeon witnessed the ceremony, and seemed well satisfied with my liberality.

The death of Madam de Saint-Aulay, and this cruel event, occasioned me so much grief, that being melancholy and ill I was unable to pursue my journey for some days. I accepted of an apartment at the house of M. Smith, and left Pauline, the nurse and the two children at the inn. On the fourth night after the birth of Sophia, a violent convulsion carried off my grand-niece. Her death inspired me with the design of bringing up under her name the orphan, whom in my heart I had adopted as my daughter. I ordered Pauline to keep these events a profound secret: I made her the confidant of my design, and of the reasons which engaged me to conceal the secret of this child, and cover the uncertainty



uncertainty of her situation as well as the condition of her parents.

It is so extremely mortifying to be ignorant of one's original; to live in a society with which we have no manner of connection; to be an object of pity; to be obliged to hear on every occasion the story of one's misfortunes; to live exposed to false conjectures and malevolent observations; to become the subject of curiosity, of a fruitless compassion, and often of an unmerited contempt: a child whose extraction is unknown, is ever a melancholy child: the least word offends and humbles him; in the midst of plenty, he is an object of commiseration: the world is cruel enough to let him perceive that he wants that protection which he would have no occasion for, if he were not insulted by seeing men glorying in the most common advantages. The title of my grand-niece ensured Sophia from mortifications of this nature, and by giving it her, I injured nobody. M. de Saint-Aulay, being disinherited like his wife, and for the very same reason, left his daughter no pretensions to a fortune.

A sum of money deposited in the hands of Monsieur Smith, induced the nurse to accompany me to Paris, whence I sent her back

back the day after my arrival, according to agreement. The little innocent creature, whose fortune and preservation heaven has been pleased to intrust to my guardianship, nursed at my house by the sister of Pauline, continues to enjoy perfect health, begins to smile upon me, improves in beauty, and becomes every day more dear to me.

I have written these particulars, that I may have ever before me, the engagements I have entered into; that I may ever remember that the child is a sacred trust, for which I am answerable to God and her family, should chance or the enquiries of M. Smith one day discover the family of her parents.

The miniature remaining in my possession is found to be the picture of the unhappy young man, whose death was so fatal to the mother of Sophia.

I certify the truth of the facts mentioned in this paper and sign it as an act which may prove of service to my little ward. Dated at Paris, this first day of August, 17**.

Signed by me, Elizabeth Sophia de Mauni, widow of Louis Philip d'Auterive.

Sequel

Sequel of the Letter preceding the copy of the manuscript.

WHAT an account, my dear Hor-tensia ! How dreadful my destiny ! A creature, the most unfortunate of her sex, was she who bore me. O God ! and torn from the dead body of my mother, born amidst the shrieks of despair, or rather amidst the dreadful stillness of death ! An ominous beginning of a life so preserved. — Why could I not follow this wretched mother to the grave ? How her fate moves and terrifies me. O ! the fatal officious hand of that man, how dared he ? But far, far from me be it to murmur or complain : resigned to the decrees of a wise all foreseeing providence, I will strive to bear up under the load of this heavy trial, I will place all my hopes in him, and by my resignation and submission, I shall perhaps be endued with the courage necessary to support those afflictions, whose very idea overwhelms me at this instant. Adieu my dear tender, and only friend.

LET.

LETTER III.

MY dearly beloved companion, calm your fears, dispel your apprehensions, give not yourself over to these tormenting thoughts. I reproach myself with troubling the peace of your mind, with raising a desire to do good in a soul so generous as yours, which must feel the most cruel disappointment at its want of power.

The death of your father, the disordered state of his affairs, the uncertainty of your fortune dependent on a tedious litigation, give me to understand but too well, the sad sensations, so clearly marked in the bitterness of your expressions. How have I wished, with what passion have I wished, to fix you at Paris, to keep you near myself, to spare you the mortification of following that rich, that covetous cousin of yours to Roan.—O my dear, what a difference between that hard-hearted guardian and Madam d'Auterive ! what goodness, what delicacy in her beneficence ! to conceal a wretched orphan under the character of a relation, to screen her from the mortification

mortification of an insulting pity,—insulting indeed.

You cannot conceive how Madam d'Auterive, should have neglected to secure my fortune by a will? You accuse her of an unpardonable neglect. The extract from some of her letters to M. Smith, will oblige you to do her more justice. In these you will find her entire affection, her tears, her anxiety, her tender partiality for her ward: you will discover her intention, her resolution, alas! too favourable perhaps. Then will you deplore with me my mother, my friend, my benefactress.

I should deem myself ungrateful, did the condition to which her loss has reduced me, obliterate but for a moment the memory of her kindness. The education she has given me, the principles for which I am indebted to her, oblige me to everlasting gratitude: to me her memory shall be ever sacred, ever dear! I will strive to do her honour by my conduct: the wise instructions of Madam d'Auterive, her noble precepts shall remain for ever engraven on my heart. In my humiliation, in the most extreme indigence, I shall never deviate from them: my punctual observation of them will be the sole consolation, the only resource which the dismal prospect now

now open before me will allow me to hope for.

I this moment received from the hands of Pauline herself, the extract she has made from the letters of her mistress. It is very long, and you will doubtless find it filled with useless circumstances; but I have no time to transcribe it. Chance affords an opportunity of sending you this packet in a very expeditious manner, as it is too bulky to go by the post; I take the same method to inclose the miniature picture, preserved by Madam d'Auterive. Madam du Marsai gave it to Pauline to deliver it to me. How was I moved at the sight of it! It seemed; perhaps I deceive myself—Examine it, my dear, tell me whether the features of that unfortunate young man, do not put you in mind of my own. Alas! that picture affects, interests me, I cannot look at it without shedding tears.

The person who is so good as to take charge of the packet, will stay some days at Roan; at whose return, you will take care to deliver it into the same hands.

*Articles relating to Mademoiselle de Valiere,
extracted from the letters of Madam d'Au-
terive to Mr Richard Smith. during a
correspondence of seventeen years.*

A R T I C L E I.

I Thank you, my friend, for the farther enquiries you have been so good as to make in England. Your correspondents in the three kingdoms, you tell me, have not heard of ary woman who disappeared about that time, nor of any man who has absented himself from his friends. This is surprising: these two unfortunate persons, were certainly above the common level. Your god-daughter is well; I love her tenderly. You are in the right. This is our child; but what need of a new tye between us to keep alive these sentiments, which no time nor distance can weaken.

A R T I C L E II.

ALL your enquiries have been to no purpose. So much the better my friend. I wish with all my soul Sophia may remain in my possession. I feel an excessive pleasure in seeing this innocent young

young creature growing up under my eye. She is gentle, gay, pretty and endearing. I shall often let you know how she does.

ARTICLE III.

WHAT! is it to maintain the title of my correspondent, is it in order to oblige me to write to you, that you persist in performing the office of my banker, and turning my money to the best account? Do you then think me capable of forgetting you? Be well assured that were this commerce of interest to be at an end, I should still remember my friend; have I then nothing to communicate to the godfather of Sophia? Yes, certainly. For I shall soon be able to tire you with the repetition of her good qualities. I will inspire you with sentiments of affection, and even of tenderness for our child.

ARTICLE IV.

I Have received the two boxes; the commission has been well executed, and I thank you for it. Part of these rich toys, is a present intended for the Countess de Germueil, my very haughty niece. And yet we are by no means well together. The

sight of Sophia is offensive to her; the sister of Madam de Saint-Aulay, sees with concern an heiress in the same degree with her son. Madam de Bayeux and Monsieur du Marsai, farther removed, but full as greedy, always speak of her as a favourite, capable of prejudicing them in their pretensions to my fortune. She will be very sufficiently indemnified, say they, for her mother's being disinherited. It is hardly credible. This family is very rich, who are so very solicitous about my disposing of my fortune. I am still young, and my relations are working out a tedious scene of uncertainty for themselves.

ARTICLE V.

I Cannot conclude my letter without chiding you for your expression when you speak of Sophia. The object of your charity? For shame, my good friend! Would I have brought her up as a relation, had I intended to humble her to such a degree? She is no such thing as the object of my charity: she is the object of my care, of my affection, of my most tender love. Sweet little creature! she is just come into my closet; if you could but see with what a grace she moves towards me, you

you would never forgive yourself, that harsh expression.

ARTICLE VI.

YOU have frightened me indeed. This Englishman is in quest of his wife, carried off, young, beautiful, with child. My heart beats within me. By good luck the dates do not agree. And besides, the mother of Sophia could certainly never be the wife of a kind of leisuring man. I never beheld a nobler, a more striking figure! Her daughter promises to have the same air of dignity. Her reason begins to dawn; she learns with great ease. I shall lay out all my care in improving these happy dispositions. She becomes every day the object of envy; they flatter and caress, but do not love her. Be faithful to our secret, my good friend: the happiness of this child, and the comfort of my life depend on it. Good God! if the story of the poor girl were once known, what mortifications would she endure from selfishness and pride.

ARTICLE VII.

YOU ask me whether Pauline be discreet. I can take upon me to answer for that good and honest creature. I have just settled an annuity on her of five hundred livres * a year. She is now the governante of Sophia, and so attached to the child, that she seems to think this place a reward sufficient for all her services. I have always remarked it my friend, a disinterested person is generally a trusty person. I have been just settling the household of my pretty ward. I have appointed her a chamber-maid of nine years old; she is niece to Pauline; and a footman who can scarce walk alone; he was a poor little slave, whom I bought to give him his liberty. The negro is a whining sloven—the chamber-maid a giddy headed stubborn girl; but the mistress is so good-humoured, and so indulgent, that she preserves peace in her little family, at which, to say the truth, I am not very much pleased, for I am amused with their childish disputes.

* About 22 l.

ARTI-

ARTICLE VIII.

I Could almost scold you; what! not search into the bottom of the affair.— This noble and rich inhabitant of the English colonies, why may not he be the father of Sophia. What became of him nobody can tell—He disappeared all on a sudden!—The time when he was seep in London, and when the Dutch captain bound for Curaçoa was to take him on board— how came you not to be struck with these concurrent circumstances? Your seaman has just set sail again; he proposes to take a long voyage, perhaps may be shipwrecked, we shall then be left in the dark.

Notwithstanding the satisfaction I find in viewing Sophia as my present delight, and in considering her as the future comfort of my old age, I should think I wronged her, if I neglected the smallest traces that can lead to the discovery of her family. Write, my friend, write to every port, where this man is likely to put in. I have schemes, though for the present at a distance, but they are such as make me very desirous of knowing the whole story of Sophia.

ARTICLE IX.

I Have not been negligent, but I have been vexed, afflicted, tormented. I have been on the point of losing my dear Sophia by the small pox, of the most dangerous kind. O, if heaven had bereft me of this precious gift of its goodness ! I have no experience of a mother's feelings, but I doubt whether they can be more tender, or more exquisite than mine. Your god-daughter is above any idea you can possibly form of her. To a thousand attractive graces, she adds a most excellent heart. She is inconsolable, when she thinks she has disengaged the meanest person ; she is blest with wit, an equal temper, understanding, and application—You see how I run on in her commendation, don't I ? And so I shall more and more ; you alone are in the secret, I have schemes as I said before ; I shall want advice, your prudence must direct me.

ARTICLE X.

YOUR questions shew how much you interest yourself in what concerns my Sophy : I am obliged to you for it ; yes,

yes, she has natural talents: her voice is sonorous, flexible and soft; she has a brilliant finger on the guitar and harpsichord; she dances with amazing grace; she loves reading, and has an exact and judicious taste. One quality she possesses, preferable to all these advantages, is her extreme good-nature, and that sensibility to friendship, with which her heart is filled. Hortensia de Canteleu takes her lessons with her: as this young lady has no mother, and lives but next door, her father lets her be with me the whole day. These two little ones strive to please, to oblige, and mutually instruct, and have the most tender, endearing regard for each other: Hortensia is delighted to hear the praises of Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay: Sophia, on the other hand, is always displeased when she thinks Mademoiselle de Canteleu is not commended enough.

Alas! my friend, this creature, as charming as she is, in the eye of a world filled with idle and absurd prejudices, is a mere nothing. What mother would make choice of her for her son; she is without relations; she is unknown—My heart is hurt with this dispensation of providence; but who can unravel its counsels?

ARTICLE XI.

YOU do not conceive my uneasiness? you do not imagine what can possibly torment me; Good God, my friend, the happiest situation in appearance has a gloomy tide; it escapes the eyes of others, but fixes our own. It is true, I am rich and independent. I am not the slave of silly caprice, or foolish passions; but I have great sensibility, am tender-hearted, the smallest deviations from virtue hurt me, but ingratitude shocks me.

I have served all my relations as you know, and yet none of them have any regard for me. I find myself at forty-six, surrounded by covetous nephews, who are for ever calculating my income and numbering my days; one would imagine, they were the proprietors of my estate, and that they grudged me the life-rent, and would fain shorten my period in it, in order to get the sooner into the possession of it themselves.

I am ashamed to tire you with an account of my domestic troubles, by entering into the particulars of these family bickerings, which I hate to talk of. After all, as you say my fortune is independent, therefore

therefore nothing but justice and equity can influence me in my disposal of it in any settlement upon Sophia.

I brought M. d'Auterive six hundred thousand livres *; you are not ignorant how much this sum accumulated in his hands in a few years. I imagine I ought to make it revert to my family, even adding to it the amount of what sums I inherited, jointly with Madam de Germeuil, Monsieur du Marsai and Madam de Bayeux: but my husband's presents; the produce of the partnership; my savings; all these are so many acquisitions; I may dispose of them, and I design them for Sophia.

A R T I C L E XII.

YOUR proposal is mad enough; let us marry, and adopt Sophia. Were it not for the prejudice it might do my character, by taking a master and living in Holland, I might possibly relish the project. What is it possible after sixteen years, that you can still retain any inclination to marry me? Lovely, charming! mighty fine? Indeed, indeed, my good friend, this finest face in the world is become a face just like another face.

* About 26000 l.

Lay out what sum you please upon your son-in-law's house: the capital, with the improvements, all go towards the portion of Sophia. As she grows up, she every day gains the affection of all about her: every body strives who shall stand foremost in her good graces; while the desire of turning my weakness and partiality, to their own advantage, seems by degrees to take place of their former jealousy. M. du Marsai could wish one of his sons were so happy as to obtain the hand of his charming cousin. Madam de Bayeux is continually crying up the agreeable person and excellent qualities of her's: Madam de Germeuil has for some time past been taking pains to gain my good will; the young Marquis is one of the most amiable creatures: oh, were she to propose him to me.—But would Sophia be happy to live under the authority of a woman so vain and so selfish? Do not pride and avarice destroy every bond of society?

A R T I C L E XIII.

I Have received with great pleasure your present to your god-daughter. The fancy of these beautiful stuffs even surpasses their richness. The inclosed from Sophia is

is really her own style; you will hardly believe it, but I assure you 'tis matter of fact. I have just taken her home from the convent, where she has been these six months, with Mademoiselle de Canteleu. Every body says, she is grown still handsomer; she is tall, genteel and graceful; her air noble, modest, even a little serious; the tone of her voice melodious, and she expresses herself in an easy natural manner; nothing affected, either in her language or carriage; she has the rare art to preserve her sincerity without deviating in the least from that good breeding, which derives its source alone from a desire to please, and which seems in her an inborn sense of goodness. She will be neither a prude nor a coquette; but I am much afraid, dear little creature, she may one day have too-much sensibility.

A R T I C L E XIV.

MY silence, as to Sophia, surprizes you; I have not said a word about her these four months. She has been absent from me. She was very ill of a cold when I set out for my country seat; imagining I should make but a short stay there, I sent the little dear back to the convent; M. de

M. de Canteleu, who accompanied me, placed his daughter there likewise; I came to Paris only yesterday.

Indeed, my good friend, I shall not to day, at least, deserve the reproach of forgetting my darling ward. I am going to tell you a long story about her, I assure you; you will call me a prating, doting old woman: be it so; but you must hear an instance of your god-daughter's goodness of heart.—When I set out, I left her five and twenty louis * for pocket-money. The day after her arrival at the convent, she purchased some lutestring and sattin, with gold and silver thread, and sewing-silk; the young mistress, her little chamber-maid, and Mademoiselle de Canteleu, set themselves to embroider, and make a number of work-bags; not a moment's recreation: Sophia would often rise an hour before her companions. In three months time, this continual labour produced fifteen louis, and put my dear ward in a condition to bestow forty on a good and indigent woman, who used to sell her flowers and ribbands, in order to enable her to take her husband out of prison, where he

* A louis is about a guinea.

had

had been confined a considerable time, without being able to raise so small a sum.

Notwithstanding her extreme necessities, the honest creature did not dispose of the money till my arrival. She brought it me this morning, not daring, she tells me, either to refuse or keep the gift of my generous niece, without my approbation. I have added twenty more louis to it, and given fifty to my dear Sophy. I intend she shall receive this sum yearly over and above her usual income: it is for the advantage of humanity in general to reward young people of a tender and liberal disposition.

A considerable part of my present is actually laid out in a pretty basket for a young boarder: her parents neglect her, want to give her a distaste of the world, and deny her all the little ornaments which her companions wear; she is extremely affected at being deprived of them. Sophia thinks her very unhappy, at not being beloved by her family. Alas! how would she lament her own sad fate, she who annexes such felicity to the consciousness of being beloved by her family, could she but know, that unconnected with the dear ties of nature, surrounded with secret enemies,

mies, she belongs to nobody, and is beloved by me alone.

ARTICLE XV.

THE condition of Sophia, you tell me, ought not to make me uneasy, that depends on myself. No one can prescribe to me in a voluntary act in which I have a right to express and to authenticate my pleasure. A will, my good friend, in favour of Mademoiselle de Valiere, is not without its difficulties. Consider she is a stranger and unknown; a thousand precautions are necessary, in order to secure the disposition of my fortune; the omission of one single formality, would enable my greedy family to annul it: they would contest my legacies, would persecute her, and perhaps she would never enjoy any of it at all.

It would be a safer way to marry her; many matches offer; but then it is Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay, it is my grand-niece whom they mean. I may alienate part of my estate, and dispose of that large and noble manor in Normandy, which I never go to, and settle the money upon Sophy. You shall see; I have more schemes than one; I shall communicate all of them

to

to you ; you will assist me in determining my choice.

A R T I C L E XVI.

Y O U are by no means mistaken, my good friend, Germeuil is the only one of all my relations whom I could wish to see the husband of Sophia ; and believe me, neither his name nor his titles induce me to give him the preference. I set a high value on noble birth ; but I value yet more certain qualities which unfortunately do not always attend on it ; these qualities my nephew possesses entirely.

It is impossible, at nineteen to be handsomer, better bred, or more prudent, or possessed of more knowledge than the Marquis de Germeuil : not in the least vain, quite free from pride, an indulgent master, a tender friend, an attentive relation ; he is possessed of goodness, gentleness, great sensibility, vast wit and judgment ; he is lively without being giddy-headed : he is gay, whilst his noble and open aspect, inspires confidence in those who approach him.

When one looks into the characters of Sophia and him, one would imagine these amiable young persons destined mutually to

to form the delight and happiness of each other: but then prejudices, that mother so proud, so ambitious.—To propose a young girl who is unknown to Madame la Contesse de Germeuil; to a lady who thinks of none but the highest matches, who would even be for matching with Mademoiselle de Sauve!

At all events, I have put up my estate to sale. This step will occasion a world of tattle in the family. My niece will perhaps speak to me about it: this estate would suit her prodigiously well; contiguous to that of her son, it would add to the value and agreeableness of her own: if she desires it on my terms, it is her's.

A R T I C L E XVII.

SO you are perfectly charmed with the picture of my god-daughter? She owed you this present. No, the painter has not flattered her. The freshness of the dawn, the air of the youngest of the graces, eyes sparkling with all the fire of love? What, my good old friend, are you acquainted with this soft language? I should never have suspected your writing in this poetical style. But this so attracting a form is not alone what must captivate the happy

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py husband, destined to pass his days with so charming a creature. May she become the companion of de Germeuil, he alone is worthy of her.

I am in treaty about selling my estate ; my niece is in a worse humour than ever ; she pouts at me, she frowns on Sophy—she questions my servants—she will speak to me. I hope she will, and wish she may.

A R T I C L E XVIII. and last.

Congratulate me, my worthy friend ; every thing succeeds as I could wish. I was at the point of concluding the bargain for my estate for seven hundred thousand livres *, when Madam de Germeuil came to desire the preference. I made no secret, that I intended the produce for Sophia's fortune ; she coloured, but concealing her vexation she launched out into the praises of my generosity to Manemoiselle de Saint-Aulay ; and using a vast deal of art in an affair in which sincere plain-dealing would have done as well, as guardian to her son, and consequently obliged to consult his interest ; she could have wished for Mademoiselle de Sauve, a rich heiress, allied to the first fa-

* Between 27000 and 28000 £.

milies.

milies. But, as his mother, entirely taken up with the thoughts of his future happiness, she should chuse Sophia, educated by me, inspired with my principles, for his wife; did she not fear the reproach of having preferred the elevation of her niece to the interest of her son.

Her artful manner set me on my guard: I did not propose Sophy; on the contrary, I approved of the marriage of my nephew with Mademoiselle de Sauve. Madam de Germeuil grew impatient; she asked me for her niece; the whole estate with a positive promise not to exclude Germeuil from his share in the remaining part of my succession.

I concealed my joy; I took a month to consider of the affair; now, my good friend, pray how am I to act: here are reasonable terms, but then they are meant for Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay. I tremble, at the confidence I must repose—Madam de Germeuil is interested; very interested; if I should appoint her son universal legatee, she would accept of Sophia de Valiere—Perhaps not; she has so much pride! to discover my secret to her in this uncertainty, were an act of imprudence. See, my good friend, think, consider of it, and let me have your notion about it.

I wait

I wait your answer, which will determine mine.

From Pauline to Mademoiselle de Canteleu.

M. Smith never saw the letter from which I have extracted this last article. He died before it arrived in Holland, after a long fit of illness. It was sent back sealed to my mistress, with a packet containing all those he had received since her journey to Amsterdam: he left an express order to this purpose with his children, a few hours before he expired. But my worthy mistress died twelve days after the receipt of this packet, which I myself locked up in the same place where she kept the papers relating to Mademoiselle de Valiere. I entreat Mademoiselle de Canteleu to observe a profound silence upon all I have communicated to her; possibly I may be blamed for taking and replacing these letters in the book of the correspondence with M. Smith, where they are under seal. The loose tying of the strings enables me to do it with ease.

LET-

LETTER IV.

WHAT a melancholy detail of particulars, do you desire of me, my dear? The extracts from the letters of Madam d'Auterive, must have informed you how much I was envied and hated by her relations. Their behaviour to me, is a natural consequence of the selfishness and jealousy which their secret hatred drew upon me. Can I without renewing my sorrow, recal to memory a day so unfortunate for me? I could wish to remove for ever, from my remembrance, every thing that may make me recollect my former situation, the sudden overthrow of my fortune, the loss of my only support, and that of all my hopes.

O my sister, my friend! I have need of strength, and of courage, to enable me to support the view of my present condition, to accustom myself to look upon the future with less trouble and dread. In spite of all my reflections, my heart rejects every scheme that necessity forces me to determine on. I find it difficult to submit,

to

to decide any way; I lament my misfortunes, and come to no resolution.

It has been proposed to me to live with a lady, who has just now undertaken to embroider a compleat set of furniture for her apartment: she desires some assistance in this tedious work, and is looking out for some young people a little above the rank of what they commonly call work-women. Pauline thinks this place will do for me. Nothing prevents my accepting of it, but my deep melancholy. Am I in a condition to present myself before this lady; I, whose eyes are continually bathed in tears? How can I avoid shedding them? On a supposition that my situation were less disagreeable, could I help regretting the loss of Madam d'Auterive? Could I avoid lamenting that cruel, that sudden separation? Could her fortune have made me amends for her loss? They who are in present possession of it, have already banished her from their remembrance—Her memory will for ever live in the heart of the unhappy orphan whom she loved.

O my Hortensia! how much has one hour, one instant altered my situation! and with it, the behaviour of so many people! What a feeble tie unites that society, of which I once made part, but from which

which I am now cast out! with what haste do they who courted, who caressed, who flattered me, now avoid me!

The moment the sad event was declared to the relations of Madam d'Auterive, they ran to her house, and assembled in the great saloon. There they waited for the arrival of those whose presence was necessary at the opening of the will: they imagined one would be found, and that it would be in my favour.

When all were come, except only the Marquis de Germeuil, who was still in Provence with the regiment he commands, Madam de Bayeux came to fetch me, I had been enquired for several times: I was in my room, on my knees, my head reclined on Pauline; we were both weeping bitterly. She regretted her gentle, generous mistress; she lamented with me and on my account, repeating, O! Mademoiselle what a loss! My God! What a loss have you suffered!

I insisted in vain, on not coming down; Madam de Bayeux assured me I could not well avoid it; I followed her into the saloon, every body rose up to receive me: Madam de Germeuil embraced me several times, her cousins caressed me extremely. I was unable to speak, I could scarce

scarce support myself: M. du Marsai said aloud; this is doubtless the sole heiress. It is very probable she is, answered Madam de Bayeux. I believe and wish she may, added Madam de Germeuil. They sat down and began the search and examination of the papers.

No will was found. However they seemed positive that Madam d'Auterive must have made one. Those fine japan cabinets which adorn the saloon alone remained to be visited: they opened three of them. The last shut with a secret spring; they were preparing to force it, when Madam de Germeuil, vexed to see so rare a piece of japan broken, called for Pauline, and asked her whether she did not know the way to open it? The poor girl seemed quite struck, and confounded: she hesitated long before she answered, but seeing herself hard pressed, she begged leave to speak a word to Madam de Germeuil; this was allowed her.

Pauline spoke very low, her hands joined, with a supplicating air; I suppress papers! cried out aloud Madam de Germeuil, reserve the perusal of them to myself? How can they relate to Sophia, how concern her alone? We have all an interest in these papers of my aunt. This said, she

she led her to the cabinet, and ordered her to open it. Pauline obeyed with tears. They found the paper written by the hand of Madam d'Auterive, a copy of the deeds which authenticated its truth, the bundle of her letters to M. Smith, still sealed up as she had received them a few days before, and her last letters sent back from Holland under a double cover.

The request of Pauline to Madam de Germeuil had just raised an extreme curiosity about the papers which concerned me alone. They immediately began to read the small papers of Madam d'Auterive; they were wholly at a loss to conceive how this narrative, apparently so foreign to all the heirs, could possibly relate to me any more than to the others: at the passage where Madam d'Auterive says, my grand-niece was carried off in a convulsion, a cry of surprize was heard, all eyes were fixed on me. Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay dead! who is she then, who supplies her place here? was the universal voice; the conclusion of the narrative discovered my whole story.

Before the reading of this paper, little attentive to what passed about me, my tears flowed only, because Madam d'Auterive was no more. I never once thought of legacies,

legacies, nor of the share I was to have in her fortune. The repeated sounds of unknown girl, and supposititious niece, brought me unhappily to myself, by discovering to me my cruel destiny.

Imagine, my dear, my astonishment, my consternation! to find myself a stranger in the midst of this company, when I thought myself surrounded by my nearest relations, and my sincerest friends; alas! I knew not how much hatred and envy the tenderness of Madam d'Auterive had excited against me. Good God! what a moment, what a terrible moment! to be assaulted with contemptuous expressions, to be the object of the most shocking reflections, to see Madam de Germeuil cruelly endeavouring to put me out of countenance, at a time, when my misfortune called for pity and comfort—my heart was ready to break, I fell senseless at the feet of Madam du Marsai.

Drawn thither by the cries of Pauline, Madam d'Auterive's chamber-maids flew to my assistance; they carried me to my room, and strove to recover me. On opening my eyes, I perceived them all round me; they bathed my hands with their tears: these poor girls were deeply afflicted with the discovery that appeared to affect me

alone: they seemed to have a double loss when they heard that I was neither the niece, nor the heiress of their good, their respected mistress.

Pauline, who had the office of house-keeper, was again sent for back into the saloon, where she found the whole family in great agitation; they had just opened the packet of the letters of Madam d'Auterive to M. Smith, in order to search for some lights into the sums actually remaining in Holland, by the extract which is still in your hands, you may easily imagine the indignation of the Countess de Germeuil on finding in these letters a too faithful picture of her character, and the exposing of a project which she had so carefully concealed.

There arose a general murmur against her; they reproached her with her interested views, with her insatiable avarice; with the marriage she had proposed to her aunt in order to make sure of the entire reversion of her fortune. Even they who, actuated by the same motives, had under-hand, though without success, used the same artifices, had yet the confidence to treat her schemes as base and dishonourable intrigues. Madam de Germeuil justified herself with haughtiness, absolutely disavowed

vowed any design of marrying me to her son, the mistake, these foolish ideas of her aunt sprung from her extreme, her ridiculous prepossession in my favour, and possibly from some words thrown out at random, merely with a view to sound her inclinations.

My name too frequently repeated during this sharp altercation, drew down on me all the malice and anger of the Countess; she run out in complaints of the weakness of Madam d'Auterive, and of so unwarrantable an imposition: why then bring up this orphan as her niece, give her so distinguished an education, make her be respected and almost adored, by all her relations? What, in order to secure her from the mortifying reproaches of the world! with the same view doubtless she wanted to enrich a stranger, a child of that sort! what must become of the girl? Of what service could so much acquired knowledge, so many useless talents be to her, unless it were to fill her head with pride? The habit of living at her ease, would render her present situation more hard to support, might make her forget her virtuous principles, possibly induce her to sacrifice them to the temptation of returning to that pomp and splendor

in which she had been so injudiciously bred up.

By this hard hearted manner of anticipating my future misfortunes, Madam de Germeuil sufficiently declared her intention of abandoning me to my fate. Dispense with my repeating her conjecture with regard to my birth, my condition, and even the morals of my unfortunate parents: you will likewise excuse my entering into all the particulars of the proposals, offered for my advantage by Madam de Bayeux, and by herself. Had these ladies intended a settlement for the daughter of the lowest mechanic, or of the meanest servant of the house, nothing could have occurred to their thoughts more cruel or more humbling. Believe me, my dear, this family have meanly revenged themselves on the poor, unknown Sophy, for all the feigned caresses so prodigally lavished for many years on Sophia de Saint-Aulay, in hopes of sharing with her a rich inheritance.

They all parted. Every body went away without vouchsafing to see me, or enquiring about my present situation: They left me to the care of common servants; I was even set on a level with them: I heard Madam du Marsai call out
to

to Pauline on the stair-case, Sophy may remain here till such time as proper measures are taken with respect to the maids of my aunt, and her.

But it is now very late ; my eyes, fatigued and heavy call for rest. And yet I expect to find none. Since the death of Madam d'Auterive, I have never tasted the pleasure of undisturbed sleep : if the depression of my spirits bring on a temporary drowsiness, I wake with troublesome and frightful dreams, and presently relapse into sorrow, grief, and devouring cares.

Ten in the morning.

Pauline has just delivered me your letter. I read with astonishment the copy of Madam de Germeuil's to your cousin. Indeed her tedious apology surprizes me. Why should Madam de Germeuil justify herself, when no body accuses her ? By defending her conduct, by laying open the motives which may serve to excuse it, does she not seem to confess that it may very justly be blamed.

So then I have it seems withdrawn myself from the authority of my protectors ? An insolent strain of ingratitude has induced me to retire without waiting the issue

of the deliberation of the heirs of Madam d'Auterive? An ill-timed haughtiness has made me neglect, even disdain, the favours of an opulent family, disposed to serve me!

O Good God! what mean subterfuges, what a false imputation! But it is highly necessary to have an answer ready for those whose curious enquiries importune me: they must be told in what manner this opulent family have thought proper to treat the darling ward of their relation; she must be proved to be unworthy of the concern which the friends and acquaintance of Madam d'Auterive may have taken in the settlement of an unhappy young woman, and Madam de Germeuil has written to your cousin merely for that purpose.

If from being long accustomed to conciliate the regard, and to see myself the object of the most tender affection of all about me, I am become too sensible to neglect, and to the contempt of so many persons whom I looked on as my best friends; if the involuntary resentment of my heart, for such insulting expressions, deserve the name of insolent ingratitude, Madam de Germeuil accuses me with justice: if not to beg assistance, be to disdain a family

a family well disposed in my favour: if my retiring from an house where I was permitted to remain, be an action bold, and offensive to my protectors: I will blush before my dear Hortensia, for having followed the impulse of an ill-timed haughtiness. But on a supposition that I had all this pride, whence does Madam de Germeuil collect the certainty that it is in me an unbecoming sentiment? Forgive me, my amiable, my consoling friend! I find that being too much taken up with the letter of Madam de Germeuil, I forgot to thank you for the repeated assurances of your generous friendship. How pleasing it is to find you still the same, when the rest of mankind are so changed in regard to me!

I must now acquaint you with the place of my retreat. Finding myself alone in an house where I had no right to remain, I sent for Madam de Beaumont, the dealer in ribbands to whom we did that small service, when we were last together in the convent. With what a zeal did this good, this grateful creature embrace the opportunity of being useful to me! she is a plain, honest, reasonable, and laborious woman; she has been a widow six months; a small legacy has put her in

a condition to enlarge her trade, by adding to it the article of modes. I occupy two rooms in her house, pretty enough, and very neatly furnished ; they adjoin to her warehouse. We have agreed upon such terms as suit my present circumstances. I am able to maintain myself some little time in this situation ; it is by no means disagreeable ; and I have nothing to complain of, but that I am served with too assiduous an attention.

Farewell, my dear Hortensia, do not attempt to justify me in the opinion of your cousin. Leave Madam de Germeuil to applaud her own, and blame my conduct. I shall always honour her as the niece of Madam d'Auterieve, and the mother of the Marquis de Germeuil. Gratitude and friendship must for ever command a total silence with regard to her character : I complain less of her abandoning, than hating me. Suffer her to treat me as haughty, and ungrateful, but never discover the secret intrigues, which my confidence in you and the necessity I am under of explaining the reasons of my proceeding, have induced me to lay before you. Possibly I may reproach myself one day for the resentment and bitter terms which have necessarily fallen from me,

me, during this tedious story: Our mis-
fortunes often make us partial. After all,
my dear, what right have I to the esteem,
the affection, and the protection of the
heirs of Madam d'Auterive? Alas! who
in the world is obliged to interest them-
selves on my account?

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LET.

LETTER V.

NO, my dear, I am not comforted, but I am resigned, and begin to look round me with less terror: I know I have sensibility; but do not think myself weak. A change so great, so sudden, so unforeseen, had thrown my soul into dejection: consternation and terror had overwhelmed my spirits. During those first moments, my eyes were open to my losses, and shut to every resource: the condition in which I had always lived appeared to me the only one in which I could live; I trembled at the thoughts of falling from it. And why should I not fall from it? What right have I to riches, splendor, pomp, to brilliant hopes? What mark is set on me to distinguish me from the crowd of unhappy wretches, tied down to labour, condemned to servitude? A foolish pride misled me, obtruding its vain chimeras on my gloomy reflections: when one is nothing, my dear, to what can one pretend? How could an unknown girl presume to put herself on a level with that small number of mortals cherished by fortune; destined by her to

ease,

ease, and to an undisturbed enjoyment, in the bosom of voluptuousness, of the industrious labour of the poor.

I will turn my eyes from this class which belongs not to me, and will boldly enter into that wherein I am thrown—Do not be too much affected, my lovely Hortensia, an humble condition shall never degrade the heart of your friend. I owe to Madam d'Auterive those precepts and lessons of virtue which will enable me to bear up under this severe trial. She taught me to distinguish honour from what the vulgar call by that name; mine shall not depend on the place I hold in the world, but on the inward sentiments of my mind. So long as I shall preserve my own esteem, so long as my heart shall not reproach me, so long as Hortensia shall call me her companion, her sister, I shall never blush at being unknown, forsaken, poor.

Yes, I have received several letters from the Marquis de Germeuil. Could you possibly think him insensible to my misfortune? He is affected with it, sincerely affected with it. His expressions are gentle and tender; indeed, my dear, they are comforting. Afflicted at the hard-heartedness of his mother; ashamed of the unworthy behaviour of his family, he asks me

me whether an heir of Madam d'Auterive may presume to wait on me.

Do not confound the Marquis de Germueil with his avaricious relations. He loved Madam d'Auterive ; he retains the memory of her virtues ; he neither hates nor despises the sad orphan whom she honoured with her protection. He still vouchsafes to call her his cousin, to shew her the same deference, the same attachment ; he pities, he respects her ; he burns with eagerness to see her ; he speaks much of her aunt ; he reveres her memory ! he laments her loss. The Marquis de Germueil weeps for Madam d'Auterive ! Oh ! let him come, we will mingle our sorrows, our sighs, our tears ! our groans ! he shall be my relation, brother, friend—Alas ! shall I still venture to call him by these names, once so pleasing to him ?

So your affairs then begin to take a more favourable turn. May your hopes not be disappointed. The happiness of my dear Hortensia would ease my heart of one half of its sorrows. But why postpone till another opportunity the interesting question you want to ask me ? At all times, you will find me ready to answer you in all the sincerity of my heart. Adieu.

L E T.

LETTER VI.

Is that, my dear, the embarrassing question? You hesitated, you feared to put it. What! do you make use of expressions so guarded, so cautiously conveyed to ask me whether I will consent to live with you, to share your apartment in that Abbey in which we passed so many undisturbed moments, where we were so happy together?

On a supposition that you are rich and independent, whence can arise the doubt? Can the companion of your childhood, accustomed to read your very soul, blush to accept an asylum with you? Can she have any reluctance to owe you her tranquillity, her happiness? When I wished for riches, in order to bestow them on you, and to keep you at Paris, that you might be near me, did I offend you, Hortensia? O my dear! do you too think me capable of an ill-timed pride?

I would refuse such assistance as vanity and an insulting companion might offer me: but I should despise my pride, if fearing

ing to lay myself open to the tender sentiment of gratitude, I should obstinately deprive my friend of the dear pleasure of serving me.

Monsieur de Germeuil is arrived. I saw him yesterday. I expected his visit with a kind of impatience: I hoped to find comfort in the conversation of Madam d'Auterive, of a relation beloved by her: I was mistaken; his presence, his tears have awakened all my sorrows. What a sensibility of heart he has! how it is moved with our common loss! His hopes of happiness are now at a great distance; he tells me the death of his aunt has blasted his most pleasing prospects. His prospects! what then did he expect of Madam d'Auterive?

I find my spirits too much oppressed to write any more. My disappointments have affected my constitution: my health is impaired; I cannot sleep; I cannot relish any kind of food: the affectionate assiduity of Pauline and of Madam Beaumont is all to no purpose; for nature calls for nothing, and I cannot force my stomach: it is no wonder my life is so melancholy, so sedentary; my application is too assiduous; my imagination is so strong,

strong, it wanders over such gloomy objects——But why does this dark melancholy make me enter into such useless details, is it in order to afflict you? Adieu, my dear Hortensia.

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LETTER VII.

TAKE courage, my dear friend, I am better. My fever has left me. After a whole month past without writing to you, I myself am able to give you proofs of my weak, my painful existence; I am recovering they say; as to my own part, I find myself totally depressed, and my anguish is almost insupportable. As soon as ever I am capable of an hour's application, I will thank my dear Hortensia for her solicitude, her offers, her tenderness, and that goodness of heart which made her sacrifice, to my supposed wants, the sole possession she at present enjoys. Adieu, my dear, lovely companion! cease to fear, my life is no longer in danger.

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LETTER VIII.

YES, my dear, I still continue to recover ; I begin to enjoy better spirits ; my colour returns ; I no longer relapse into those long swoonings which endangered my life ? but my languor is not removed ; it is become habitual, it is the effect of a deep melancholy ; time may diminish it ; to me it seems impossible it should ever wholly subdue it.

How, pray, should I be silent on the affecting proof you have given me of your love ? Why should you be offended with the expressions of my gratitude ? I was more moved than surprized at seeing your casket in the hands of Pauline. It shall be sent back to you Tuesday evening by a trusty hand. I would have accepted of your assistance, if want of money had reduced me to any disagreeable extremity : what ! send me your jewels for me to pledge or sell them ! Oh, my dear Hortensia, the remembrance of so noble a generosity, of so true a friendship, shall always

ways lie nearest my heart. I will never mention it to you, because you forbid me; but it shall remain always engraven on my memory.

An unlooked for favour, is become a most useful resource to me. After many deliberations, in which M. de Germeuil took the lead, the heirs of Madam d'Autterive have come to an agreement on a point which has long been contested. They have ordered Pauline to deliver me my linen, my laces, and my clothes. The valuation of my casket, my jewels, and my goods, has redoubled their animosity against me. They say Madam de Germeuil cannot bear to hear my name mentioned. Alas ! I cannot think without sorrow—Oh, my dear, it is most afflicting to be hated !

I have discharged the expences of my illness, by the sale of two pieces of India stuff, too rich to be of any use to me at present. I imagined myself to be indebted to several people, but M. de Germeuil, by obliging Pauline to accept of a pretty considerable sum, became my only creditor. I have reimbursed the girl for what she had laid out, and restored the whole.—Good God ! my dear

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can Madam de Germeuil have been in the right ? Have I pride and haughtiness ? Sensible to the generous attention of the Marquis, filled with gratitude, I was by no means able to thank him without blushing, without shedding tears.

I think my misfortune has redoubled his friendship. His first visit excited a great deal of emotion and confusion in me. We both wept bitterly before we were able to speak. At the sight of him, I forgot the distance which fortune had put between us, since our separation. Indeed his air somewhat more reserved, and his expressions less familiar, brought me back to a juster way of thinking, not without some concern : but then his attention during my long illness, his anxiety, his assiduity, his eagerness to oblige me, all these convince me I am still dear to him. He comes several times a day to share the irksomeness of my solitude, and though he is himself wrapt up in an unusual pensiveness, he uses every art to divert me from mine.

I cannot possibly write any longer ; my head is still exceeding weak. Farewell, my dear Hortensia ; accept my sincere thanks,

thanks, and take it in good part that I do not enlarge on so noble a procedure as your own, which cannot but fill my heart with sentiments of gratitude.

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LETTER IX.

EASE, my dear friend, to fill your imagination with these tormenting ideas ; I can still maintain myself several months in my present situation. I have need of time to resume my strength, revive my dejected soul, and recover that calm, at least in appearance, so necessary to those who are to live under the eyes of others, and depend on their favours. How shall I be able to appear at this very time before the lady whose protection is promised me ? A gloomy air is easily mistaken for ill temper ; it destroys confidence ; it gives a disadvantageous impression. They who have no interest in our melancholy, seldom forgive the irksomeness it inspires.

Why, my dear, why afflict yourself at seeing me disposed to embrace this offer ? I would not do it, were it in my power to choose a less disagreeable condition. I may stay with Madam de Beaumont—It is true, I may so ; but I do not know whether I ought : new circumstances require new reflections.

When I formed my first plan, I found by the calculation of several days, that I should

should be able to maintain myself in every thing necessary by a constant application to work. A month's illness, and my long weakness, have taught me by experience how chargeable this forced interruption of my work must be. The accidental loss of time, and the extraordinary expences would reduce me to very disagreeable extremities. And yet I should like to preserve my liberty, my independence, and to avoid the wretched state of subjection, that all must endure who live under the protection of the great. But then, will reason, will decency permit me to live alone?

I am very young, my dear Hortensia, and little used to govern myself by my own understanding: if that should mislead me! A worthy good woman, but without any knowledge to the world; a faithful and good natured servant, long accustomed to fall in with all my desires; these are my guides: but are they safe ones? For some time past, I begin to perceive that without having any thing to fear from our own reproaches, we should still be on our guard against those of the world.

My youth and situation require on my part an extreme attention to all my steps; if I were accused, who would undertake my

my defence? I dread the world, and its malicious remarks—Are you not surprised, my dear, how an afflicted imagination magnifies our ideas, leads them far beyond reality, and even probability: and what is this world, that is to be my censurer? Who in this wide universe will vouchsafe to examine, to drop a look on me? Alas! you alone are interested in this obscure, painful, and forlorn being.

It is the common effect of a gloomy melancholy to raise in us vague fears, and to throw us into suspicion and anxiety. Would you believe it? M. de Germeuil makes me uneasy, perplexes me; I cannot account for it: His sentiments for me are the same I always wished to inspire him with; my own have not changed, and yet that friendship, formerly so sweet, so natural, tasted with so much pleasure, is now no longer a gentle impulse: it is still agreeable, still warm; but is no longer calm. Indeed, this friendship is become the subject of my most serious reflections.

Do not speak to your cousin, do not risk the trial. Move her in my favour? Oh! by no means, I beseech you. If she is apprehensive of failing in the first advances she makes you, would it not be imprudent to propose to her the rendering them still

still more considerable ? I do certainly wish to live with you, but not at her house. I conjure you, my Hortensia, leave this project. Shall I speak truth ? I do not enough esteem the character of that lady to consent to receive any favour from her. O good God ! if I thought it becoming to lay myself under obligations, I should have no uneasiness as to the future. Monsieur de Germeuil is but too pressing on that article —If I refuse his assistance, shall I accept of that which you might beg for me ; this would certainly offend him, and I am very far from having such a design. Farewell, my dear ; give over your project, I conjure you to do it.

LETTER X.

I Am as much concerned at the death of your *Reporter* * as you can be ; in your present situation, it is a cruel event : the probity of that worthy magistrate gave room to hope for a speedy determination. Much time will be necessary before any other can inform himself of the nature of the case, and this tedious waiting is a real punishment. But, can I read without tears, my dear, that you are doubly affected with this loss on my account ? It counteracts, it prolongs the success of the favourite project of your heart ; your thoughts, your wishes are wholly taken up with this retreat, where we may be together ! amiable, generous girl ! dwell not for the present on that project, it affects you too deeply. There is no likelihood of any change in my condition ; comfort that warm, that tender heart, with the certainty of being always able to find an opportunity to o-

* A Counsellor whose business it is previously to examine the proofs and other matters relating to the action, and to make his report to the judges : the manner of doing this, has generally great weight in determining the cause.

oblige me ; calm your anxious mind ; do not let me reflect with sorrow, that my situation adds a weight to all your sufferings.

Madam de Moncenai is still in the country. She has been already spoken to ; on her return, when introduced to her as a relation of Madam de Beaumont, if I am accepted, I cannot refuse to be with her. Why do you annex the idea of servitude to this place ? It may possibly require some complaisance ; but what condition in life can dispense with it ?

The Marchioness de Moncenai is rich, young, happy : she will questionless be gay, gentle, humane ; obliged only to assist her in her work, why may not my situation at her house be easy ? Do not discourage me, my dear friend ; do not add to the secret reluctance, and distaste—Perhaps I am but too fond of that liberty I am about to sacrifice.

Pauline has just delivered me your letter. I opened it with eagerness, and perused it with vexation. You have experienced how disagreeable it is to meet with a refusal. If you were less zealous, in your obliging wishes, you would have waited for my answer ; it would have spared you this mortification. I should be sorry that Madam de Germeuil knew the step you

had

have taken ; her son might hear of it, and suspect me to have set you to work : certainly his heart would be offended with so strange a conduct. Should I suffer this friend so affected with the overthrow of my fortune, so assiduous in his endeavours to soften the rigour of my situation ; should I suffer this friend to think that I have meanly stooped to beg the assistance of your cousin, after having been proud enough to reject his offers ? But no more of this. I complain of your imprudence, my dear ? I should think myself ungrateful were I to complain of any thing in you.

LETTER XI.

YOU cannot conceive my uneasiness, with respect to the assiduities of the Marquis de Germeuil: they appear to you as the natural consequence of an intimacy formed in our earliest infancy, kept up by a remarkable conformity in our taste and sentiments. Admitting this conformity, so much to my honour, would not the inequality of our fortunes form a new obstacle to our union?

My dear Hortensia, you consider me as still with Madam d'Auterive, living under her eye, deriving consequence from my appearance, from her tenderness, and from the assiduity of all who endeavoured to please me. View me now in a scanty lodg-ing, dejected, alone, in a plain dress; employed, not as formerly, in running over the keys of an harpsichord, or the strings of a lute, in drawing a landscape, or making extracts from what I read; but working laboriously in order to draw some small pittance from my labour, often tied to an hour, forced to make dispatch, to submit to every inconvenience, and often to spend part

part of the night in compleating some piece of finery impatiently waited for.

Oh! my dear, it is no longer Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay, no longer the grand-niece of Madam d'Auterive, who receives the visits, the frequent visits of the Marquis de Germeuil; it is Sophia de Valiere, Madam Beaumont's apprentice, spending half the day in the conversation of a titled, rich, handsome, amiable young man, who has no other connection with her, but what proceeds from habit, and, perhaps from compassion.

No ties of blood connect us; his mother hates me; as a stranger to the eyes of all his family, does it become me to receive him? Himself seems to fear lest the world should perceive the regard he still has for me. He comes alone, on foot, or in a carriage which is none of his own. Why conceal himself? Whence this affected air of mystery, if he did not imagine that his or my conduct might possibly lie open to censure: if Madam de Germeuil should hear of the Marquis's visits, should be angry, should presume to imagine.—Has she not already said that I might forget my virtuous principles, sacrifice them—Heaven avert the cruel omen!

I ought to speak to the Marquis de Germeuil; do not you think so, my dear? I

ought to impart to him my reflections, my doubts, my fears. Can he think it strange that I should be careful of my reputation? Shall I neglect the only blessing that it is in my power to acquire or preserve? Yes, I will speak to him, I will beg of him to visit me less frequently; I will open my heart to him; his will never be offended with my confidence, with my friendship.—Oh! I am not altered in my sentiments for M. de Germeuil! in another situation, in happier circumstances I would not banish the complaisant, the amiable companion of the pleasures of my childhood: he is very dear to me! he will be always so. But one of the miseries attached to my present condition, is, that I have not the choice of my comforts, and to be obliged to make a new sacrifice when my poverty has already left me so destitute.

Farewell, my dear Hortensia, continue to love an unfortunate being, whose only pleasure it is to think she can never become indifferent to you.

LETTER XII.

YOU have just found a zealous friend in the parliament of Roan ; I give you joy with all my heart, my dear : your hopes revive ? May you be happy, compleatly happy ! is the ardent wish of your friend.

I am truly sorry to find you are so averse to my plan of conduct. I would wish to satisfy you, and not go to live with Madam de Moncenai, but wait for the interesting decision of your law-suit ; but, as I have already told you, I think I ought not ; every thing conspires to induce me to pursue the design you urge me to quit.

Do not be angry with me, do not accuse me of obstinacy ; cease to call me your inflexible friend : did you know the strange situation of my mind, you would never exhort me to preserve that independence of which you warn me : I shall one day regret the loss.

I know not whether my misfortune, and the decay of my strength during my illness, have altered my constitution, de-

troyed the evenness of my spirits, and affected my temper; but I am no longer the same person; baffled, and wavering, I cannot determine my will. You know I had resolved to beg of Mons. de Germeuil to give over his visits, or at least to make them less frequent. I imagined I might ingenuously confess to him the cause of my uneasiness: well, my dear, every time I prepared myself to make this request, and to discover the motives of it, an inexpressible perplexity, inward confusion, and strange emotion, stopt my faltering voice; my lips could not pronounce 'come no more'; I was afraid of appearing capricious unjust, ungrateful; I feared to offend, to displease, to afflict him. Whilst I looked on him, I forgot the force of all those reasons that were to justify so uncivil and so unkind a request. I mused, I sighed; my eyes were full of tears, and I remained in stupid silence.

Shall I tell you all? I know not what contrariety of sentiment, whose difficulty I could not foresee, seems to deter me from the explanation of my purposes: I would fain receive no longer the visits of Mons. de Germeuil: I think it decent to will it; but if I examine myself, if I am sincere with myself, what I will that I do not wish. No, my

my dear, I do not desire the absence of Mons. de Germeuil. If any abatement in his friendship, if any dissatisfaction at my solitary situation, or if my habitual melancholy should induce him to make his visits less frequent, it would give me real uneasiness. His presence suspends, softens my pain, dissipates my languor, and gives life and motion to my spirits: whether he speaks or keeps silence, my gloomy sadness lessens while he is near me; it returns, it redoubles when he leaves me. After having repeated to myself all day long; I ought not, I will not see him any more; I wait with impatience, the hour when I am to see him; if he lingers beyond that, every instant seems of an insupportable length; but if he comes before, I am pleased with him, his impatience obliges me, and if I dared, I would thank him for it.

From my earliest infancy my regard for the Marquis de Germeuil has always been exceeding tender. It used to take up all my thoughts; but it gave me no pain—on the contrary, it added to my happiness: and you must remember, my dear Hortensia! when the sight of the Marquis de Germeuil, invited us to pleasure; the time is not long since passed, when both of us cried out for joy, so soon as he was announced

at his aunt's. How comes it that at present—Yes, I will preserve that friendship, though I am not at liberty to enjoy it. I give over the project of speaking to Mons. de Germeuil, and laying open my fears to him: I will ask nothing of him; I will not banish hence the nephew of Madam d'Auterive; I will not use a friend so cruelly, who is worthy of every regard from me; never, never will I tell him, 'come no more.' And why did I mean to tell him so? Am not I on the point of going to live with Madam de Moncenai? You assure me I shall be miserable there; what signifies it, my dear; I can support grief, sorrow, humiliation, but cannot offend the Marquis de Germeuil. I will not give him any just grounds to complain of me; he shall never accuse me of caprice; he shall never suspect me of levity of sentiment, or an inconstancy of inclination of which my heart and understanding are equally incapable.

Forgive me, my dear, if I follow not a counsel which the most generous friendship has dictated to you. I may engage with Madam de Moncenai, without prejudicing the plan formed for our common felicity. As soon as you are in possession of your estate, I will make you the arbiter of my

my condition. You require my word of honour. Very well, my charming friend, I give it you, I promise, I swear to my dear Hortensia, to submit to every law which her noble heart shall think fit to impose on me.

LETTER XIII.

GOOD God! what a surprize, what an emotion, do you occasion me! What, how, whence comes it, why do you think, my dear? — I cannot tell you whether your notions are justly founded. I am little acquainted with the effect of a sentiment I have ever been taught to dread; I am ignorant whether my heart be susceptible of the passion with which you think it affected; I do not desire to inspire it; I do not think I feel it: but you alarm me, by assuring me it is often concealed under the appearances of an innocent friendship. Aye! and how long then have you been studying this dangerous passion? Who taught you the art to discern an involuntary tenderness; an irresistible inclination, from that calm peaceful affection, whose sweet and gentle impressions, warm the hearts of relations and friends? I do not remember ever to have heard you distinguish between these two kinds of attachment.

Allow me to leave your embarrassing question unanswered. I acquaint you with every

every motion of my soul ! Why, I do not endeavour to conceal them ! but if these emotions surprize me ; if they vary every moment ; if their source be a secret even to myself, what can I possibly inform you of ?

I find it impossible to follow your advice. No, my dear, no ; I will not sound the depth of my heart ; I will not dive into that of M. de Germeuil ; whither would the fruitless discovery of his sentiments, or of my own, lead me ? The time was, when I could entertain hopes ; when smiling prospects amused my vacant hours. The happy need not fear giving a loose to their imagination ; pleasing objects meet their eyes ; no cloud darkens the ground of their brilliant picture ; but sorrow throws a gloomy veil over all our ideas : possibly I might find new matter of affliction on venturing to make so imprudent a search : does it become me to suffer my fancy to wander one single moment, and to dwell on these vain, these aspiring illusions ?

Could you, my dear Hortensia ?— What a name do you give to the Marquis de Germeuil, my lover ; he ! I shall regret my lover ? Ah ! it is enough to regret a tender, a faithful friend.

Every thing conspires to separate us ; soon we shall see each other no more. He
is

is to accompany his mother to Granson at his return, I shall be with Madam de Moncenai ; and thus I shall have sacrificed the only pleasure of my life to decency, to duty ; it must be—Cannot the consciousness of having done so, comfort and relieve the oppression of my heart ?—Sometimes I am inclined to inform Mons. de Germeuil, that he will not find me any more at this place. But in confessing to him only some of the reasons which determined me to quit my abode, while I am forced to be silent on the principal one, I shall be obliged to lay a greater stress upon the others. To enter on the humiliating detail of my situation ; to expose my misery or at least bring it back to his remembrance ! what answer shall I then make to his just reproaches ? He has tried every expedient to induce me to accept his offer and to secure me an independent establishment.—Oh ! it is not, as he imagines it, cruel haughtiness which induces me to reject his presents. I could wish to owe my settlement to Mons. de Germeuil ; I could be glad to call him the author of my happiness ! but the regard I owe my sex, will not give me leave to accept it at his hand.

I could wish to forget what you have written to me. You have raised unea-

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reflections in my mind. I cannot help reading over again in spite of me, that strange letter.— Oh ! my Hortensia, beware of giving me any further information. Give me leave to think, to believe, that there is no sentiment more warm, more tender, more capable to engross a whole heart than the sincere regard, which it shall ever be my delight to profess for you.

LETTER XIV.

I Have this moment received your obliging letter. My present disposition of mind will not allow me to answer so many interesting articles. That which concerns Madam de Moncenai and the Countess de Terville her mother, occasions me an extreme regret. How good was it in you, my dear, to procure all these informations. Alas ! your intelligence comes too late : I was introduced this morning, accepted, and hired, so that in ten days time your sorrowful friend will be no longer her own mistress. No words can describe the reluctance I felt in suffering myself to be presented at Madam de Moncenai's. I thought I had been more humble, and more resigned. How many cruel reflections successively followed each other ; what mortifying ideas made me cast down my eyes during the questions of the Marchioness to Madam de Beaumont ? To hear the humiliating conditions of my servitude proposed ; the mention of wages—Is it then true my Hortensia ?—But let us stifle these last remains of pride. O my dear, to be mingled and confounded with the daughters

of low mechanics, brought up to get money by the employment of their time; to become their companion, and to hope for no pre-eminence over them but by my superior skill and diligence at my work— Do not sympathize with me in my ill-timed grief; let not the too visible marks of my sorrow on this paper, call forth your own tears; assist me to repress these emotions, doubtless very blameable: for, who am I? whence arises this pride within me, which all my efforts have not hitherto been able to surmount? I blush at my vanity, at my unreasonableness. If the uncertainty of my condition were known, the meanest of these girls, whom I cannot bear to look on as my equal, might possibly disdain the title of companion, which I now grudge her.

How soon shall I be forced to regret that fellowship in sorrow so formed to alleviate it! what! Mons. de Germeuil— But he is going; he leaves me; I shall perhaps never see him again! my heart is oppressed. I wish—But what wish am I allowed to form? Farewell, my dear, I cannot explain myself any further. The more I lay open to you my broken heart, the more I shall afflict yours.

L E T.

LETTER XV.

I hasten to write to you, to lay before you the perplexing situation of my mind, and to ask your salutary counsels; but I know not whether the agitation of my thoughts, the inconceivable uneasiness of my soul, will allow me to inform you of the cause of those conflicts whose violence I experience.

Oh my dear, what bright prospects open before my eyes, what flattering assurances! what engaging offers! you are not mistaken; the Marquis de Germeuil—But I am unable to proceed; I can hardly fetch my breath; my hand trembles. I cannot compose myself.

O my clear sighted friend, you told me true—I submit my conduct to your better understanding; guide me in the most important affair of my life; determine my fate, that of the Marquis de Germeuil. His happiness depends, he tells me, on my answer—I dread—I hesitate—No, I dare not decide the fate of that lovely man, of sure that endearing friend. But must I call him sibily by that name still? No, I dare not take tion upon

upon me to be the sovereign disposer of his happiness.

For these two hours past I have been entirely lost to myself. At six, I had given over all hopes of ever seeing the Marquis ; I thought him gone. He had left me the evening before with so much concern ! his eyes bathed in tears, his sighs suppressed, and the tone of his voice so changed ; all conspired to persuade me he had taken his last farewell ; never, never shall I see him more. Sorrowful, dejected, incapable of any application, I abandoned myself to the most afflicting thoughts, when the door opened ; my heart beat, I turned my head, I perceived the Marquis. His presence I am at once surprised and overjoyed me : I rose h my up in haste ; I ran to meet him ; I cried com- out, is it you, is it really you ?

Pleasure was painted on his countenance. He repeatedly cried out ; how pleasing, how affecting is this reception ! Oh ! my charming cousin, how have I wished to discover in your eyes the remains of their wonted vivacity !—But could you possibly think me gone ? What ! leave my dearest friend without one farewell ; without being sure of her inclinations ?—You cannot possibly conceive the strange awkward situation of my mind. I must confess to you that

that this speech, simple and natural as it may appear, threw me into the utmost confusion ; I stood confounded, unable to utter a word.

Mons. de Germeuil placed himself by me ; he viewed me for a long time with a most interesting look ; and seizing one of my hands, pressed it tenderly ; and in a low but animated voice, I set out, my dear cousin, I leave you to-morrow—He stopped. Yes, I set off continued he, but shall I bear along with me the sad reflection of leaving you alone, without help, without support ? His sighs again stopped his voice : once, said he, I thought myself a favoured friend. Am I then to live ever precluded from the rights attached to that dear title ? Your obstinate refusal—Indeed you know how much you afflict me !

He rose, went towards the window ; and came back to me ; I am acquainted with all your schemes, said he. Pauline has discovered them to me : if you do not wish to pierce my heart with a thousand cruel pangs, you will give them over, you will place more confidence in me ; you will acquiesce in the little plan which the honest girl, who is entirely attached to you and to your true interest, approves, and is to com-

communicate to you. I would have interrupted him ; he cried out with earnestness, give me leave for once to express my sentiments with freedom : I have long imposed on myself a most rigorous silence ; I respected your tears ; I partook in your sorrow ; I have lamented in secret that noble but cruel pride which made you reject my offers, and prefer the most wretched resources, a painful laborious employment, to the assistance of a friend ; of a relation ! and—a tender relation. For still I look on you as attached to me by the ties of blood : these ties so dear I will strengthen, by still sweeter and more lasting ones. O my lovely cousin ! mark my secret sentiments ; hear my vows, my resolution, my love, my passion—Blush not, Sophy, let no fear, no uneasiness trouble that delicate frame of soul, that for the world I would not alarm ; suspect not my purposes, nor doubt one moment, the purity of my affection : Madam d'Auterive designed you for me : she had resolved our union : Oh ! her will is dear, is sacred to me, I rest my whole happiness in obeying it ; I attest her memory, I swear it to the heiress of her virtues.

O Hortensia, a rapid emotion unfelt before, poured into my heart pleasing delight,

light, transporting joy, and most delicious sensations! the remembrance of all my afflictions vanished; the idea of my humiliation, of my misery, disappeared all on a sudden: It looked as if I had recovered my former happy state: transported beyond myself, I seized the hands of the Marquis, I pressed them between mine; my ready lips were opening to all the effusions of gratitude, friendship, esteem, veneration.

—Yes, my dear, that moment he filled me with veneration: but raising my downcast eyes on him, a secret shame withheld me; I could not bear the fire—of his—forced to turn aside my own, speechless confounded, I sighed; a strong palpitation made me fear to fall senseless into his arms.

You are silent, my lovely Sophia, replied Mons. de Germeuil, you cast down your eyes, you will not suffer me to read your soul! Very well; I do not insist on a formal consent, it would be too much for the delicacy of my modest friend; but permit me to interpret that sweet confusion in my favour; do not disappoint the hopes it gives me; allow me to indulge the flattering idea: I shall go away satisfied; I will wait the confirmation of your goodness and condescension, at Granson; you know my

sincerity ; I will not pour forth useless protestations, and vain oaths ; I am a stranger to the language of seduction. I love, I adore you ; I always loved you. If some qualities distinguish me from the common run of men ; if I have not the vices too justly imputed to youth ; if I have fled those vile amusements, whose charms are so powerful on that age, I owe the rectitude of my morals, to the ardour of pleasing you, to the desire of deserving you, to the hope of obtaining you : yes, ever since my childhood, Sophia is the wife chosen by my heart ; Oh ! if her's partake of my tenderness ; if in labouring for my own felicity, I can promise myself to secure her's, I see nothing in the universe capable of stopping me in my projects, and of opposing my forming those ties which I burn to enter into.

Nothing, cried I : what, will Madam de Germeuil consent to bestow the name of your wife on an unhappy stranger, on the object of her disdain, her hatred, and her contempt ? Can you forget, sir, your birth, and the uncertainty of my condition ! Is the woman so much as known whom you can venture to chuse for your companion ? So many prejudices to be overcome, so many obstacles to surmount—I have fore-

foreseen every thing, considered every thing, replied he with warmth ; do not debase yourself in your own esteem by the notion of an imaginary inequality between us : my advantages are but small, compared with the gifts you hold from nature. If my treatises, if the most pressing instances cannot determine my mother to prefer my happiness to the ambitious views which made her seek an alliance with Mademoiselle de Sauve, I will sacrifice the hopes of her fortune without regret ; I will undergo the punishment of a voluntary fault : my mother may deprive me of her fortune, but the possession of what alone is dear to me will indemnify me for the loss. In six months I shall be master of a pretty considerable inheritance, and at liberty to enter into engagements beyond the controul of authority ; then will I fly to lay my heart and fortune at your feet. Happy, a thousand times happy, if my dear Sophia vouchsafe to second my desires, and to compleat my hopes, by the gift of that hand on which I swear never to accept any other. I strove to withdraw my hand ; I would have spoken : not a single objection, said he, in the most passionate accent, except it arise from your indifference, from an invincible aversion to me. Sophia, my dear So-

Sophia ! do you then hate me ! I was dumb, for how could I possibly answer that question ?

He looked on me with tenderness ; he held my hands ; he kissed them ; I felt them wet with his tears, nor was I able to suppress my own. I leave you, O my Sophia, he repeated, I am going—I leave you to your reflections, continued he ; call to mind your former goodness. With what impatience shall I expect a line from your hand. Pauline will speak to you. Lend an obliging attention to that girl ; she will speak to you about me, my designs, the plan necessary for your tranquillity, and for my repose. Farewell, farewell, my charming cousin. After pronouncing these words, he rose up hastily, and hiding his face, he quitted my room with precipitation.

I remained a long time in the place where he had just left me, my eyes fixed on the door, without motion, and almost without breath. An extreme effusion of tenderness followed this suspension, as it were, of all my faculties, till at length tears flowing, even with pleasure, brought me to myself : I repeated to myself all the expressions of Mons. de Germeuil ; while gay illusions, smiling images, accompanied my

sense of gratitude. Complete the wishes of Mons. de Germeuil? I complete his wishes! can I then bestow on him the only possession he values? I make him happy? —Oh! answer me quickly, my dear Hortensia, answer me in all the sincerity of your heart: what would you do? I know what I would wish to do myself, but I know not what I ought to wish for:

LETTER XVI.

HOW melancholy my solitude is become to me, my dear friend, what sullen silence reigns around me, how long the hours seem ! alas ! why should I wish them to pass quicker away ? They will neither bring me pleasure nor comfort.

I this morning received a very tender note from Mons. de Germeuil : he bids me farewell ; and begs, presses, nay conjures me to permit Pauline to execute the orders he has given her. With what goodness does he enter into the most minute particulars ; you may judge of it by the following articles.

“ Air and exercise appear to me absolutely necessary, in order to remove the extreme weakness of Mademoiselle de Valiere ; you will engage her to retire to the house I have hired in her name. “ You know the Bailiff ; he has received my orders, and you are acquainted with my intentions.”

“ You will endeavour to prevail with Mademoiselle de Valiere to resume her usual amusements. She will find in the

“ pavilion next the river, her pencils,
 “ drawings, crayons, harpsichord and lute,
 “ her music and her two cases of books;
 “ I had them bought at my aunt's sale, in
 “ order to restore them to her, when in a
 “ condition to take them home.”

“ Your niece is to wait on her as for-
 “ merly. In the mean time the Bailiff and
 “ his wife will undertake the rest of the bu-
 “ siness till my return.”

“ If Mademoiselle de Valiere discove-
 “ any reluctance to be directed by my ad-
 “ vice; if her heart refuse its consent to the
 “ ardent wishes of mine; if she cannot re-
 “ lish a proposal formed for our common
 “ happiness; if her indifference make her
 “ separate her interest from mine; if she
 “ will not consent to inhabit a place where
 “ every object must trace out my care and
 “ tenderness; obtain of her at least tha-
 “ t she deprive me not of the only comfor-
 “ capable of softening her refusal. This
 “ would be a cruelty which I cannot allow
 “ myself to suspect in a soul so noble, &
 “ generous as her's.”

“ Madam d'Auterive intended to secur-
 “ to Mademoiselle de Valiere a part of her
 “ fortune; you have given me proof
 “ of it. What is to devolve to me on
 “ day, as my share of her succession?

“ wha

"what I think I cannot in justice appropriate
"ate to myself. I shall therefore accept
"it as a trust; it will pass through my
"hands, only to return to its original desti-
"nation.

"I beseech Mademoiselle de Valiere
"would please to accept of the pocket
"book * which accompanies my letter.
"I conjure her to keep it as a small ad-
"vance of a sum which belongs to her. I
"did not dare to present it to her myself.
"You know how cruelly her obstinate and
"continual refusal has pierced my heart.
"When my sentiments, and my intentions
"are once known to her, I should look
"on the least mark of mistrust as an ag-
"gravating circumstance of her contempt,
"which would drive me to despair.

"Lay out all your zeal to serve me in an
"occasion where your success will entitle
"you to every mark of my gratitude. Put
"Mademoiselle de Valiere in mind, that I
"expect to hear from her, and that with
"the utmost impatience. Urge her to
"grant me this favour, so passionately de-
"sired, &c. &c."

Write to him, my dear! O my God!
what shall I say to him? If her heart refuse

* In the French idiom, implies its contents, as
India bonds, the notes of public notaries, &c.

its consent to the ardent wishes of mine—
Can he think, can he believe?—Why
was I not born in the highest rank; why
do I not possess all the treasures of the earth!
this hand which he vouchsafes to ask, which
he vouchsafes to desire—Generous Ger-
meuil! let it not once enter thy thoughts
that a poor friendless girl, loses herself in
these vain wishes; no, she is not destined
to make thee happy: drive away the re-
membrance of the unfortunate creature,
whom thou honourest with so tender a sen-
timent. Fate, by humbling her, hath torn
from her every hope of being thine.

But I cannot write; I find myself borne
away by the impulse of my soul; I must
give vent to my tears, and abandon myself
to my melancholy thoughts; they redou-
ble every moment; become more and
more bitter: pity me, I am truly misera-
ble, a thousand times more miserable than
I thought I could be.

LETTER XVII.

FAR from answering my expectation, your letter surprises, troubles, vexes me. I was in hopes the conformity of our principles would have inspired you with counsels capable of confirming me in a resolution already formed : whence comes it, my dear, we do not think alike ? Friendship suggests that advice. I believe it. But then that friendship may prepossess you, may deceive you, and I am sure my reason does not mislead me.

Have you maturely examined the situation of Mons. de Germeuil and mine. You consider me alone ; you see my interest, but are blind to his ; you can easily remove all those difficulties which you apprehend. I shall look on as insurmountable obstacles.

I have nothing to object to your praises of the Marquis, I do justice to his character ; I am well acquainted with the nobleness of his heart. The sensibility of his nature, his goodness, his candor endeared him to me, from the first moment that my reason taught me to discern his amiable

qualities. I have no sort of doubt as to the sincerity of his attachment, or the purity of his intentions ; but will friendship, honour, duty, gratitude, allow me to accept of his hand ? I should make him happy. You think I should. For one moment I had the same seducing idea myself ; but to comply with his request ; to compleat his wishes, would be to deliver him over to an eternal repentance for having entertained those wishes so contrary to his true happiness.

What ! my dear Hortensia, shall I reward so unbounded an affection with an improper compliance. Shall I consent to blast the hopes of Mons. de Germeuil ? What I ? Shall I occasion the sacrifice of the greatest part of his fortune ? Shall I expose him to the anger, the fury, the vengeance of that irritated mother ? Shall I deprive him of the esteem of his friends, and the good-will of his relations ? Shall I blend his fortune with that of an unhappy woman, and carry into his house that misery which pursues me ? Shall the Marquis de Germeuil be wanting in his duty to himself ; commit a voluntary fault and bear its punishment ! — O let him preserve his numberless advantages ; may they form the durable felicity of his life ; may he be loved,

ed, cherished, revered ! May the sad Sophia never cast a blemish on his glory, nor stop his career to those dignities which his rank and fortune promise him. You say he will forget me; why, if he does, my dear, I shall perhaps weep in secret; but then I can say to myself, in all the sweet satisfaction of a heart free from remorse, that amiable man, that generous friend, has received at my hands the reward due to his noble disinterestedness.

We ought not to sacrifice ourselves to considerations which may prove vain. I believe my own to be just. I will say no more; I look on it as an indispensable duty to refuse the offers of Mons. de Germeuil. It is not reasonable to reject the favours of fortune. I allow it: other circumstances might render me more complying with your advice, and give me less reluctance to contract such great obligations.

If Mons. de Germeuil were arrived at that time of life when experience, knowledge of the world, and of one's self, generally determine our way of thinking; if he were master of his actions; if his principles, confirmed and known, could give his conduct the appearance of a reflected choice, and of a preference shewn

to those estimable qualities, which in the eyes of a discerning world, will always carry it against fortune, birth, and every other reputed advantage, I should not hesitate a moment; I would accept the honour he condescends to offer me; my whole life should be spent in the demonstration of my gratitude; in justifying his goodness to me, by my conduct, by my assiduity, and by a continual attention to please and to oblige him.

But the Marquis is young: were I to consent to this unequal union, we should both be condemned for our imprudence, without a hearing by that prejudice so common against those at our time of life. Far from ennobling the object of his love, Mons. de Germeuil would expose her to the most cruel censure: he would be thought indiscreet, I should be accused of interested views; while he would be looked on as a weak seduced young man: and indeed, why should they think otherwise? In a case where two persons concur in breaking through the laws of society, he who derives the most advantage from their common fault, must naturally incur the greatest share of blame: would you have your friend suspected of double-dealing and artifice—would you wish Madam de Germeuil

Germeuil should reproach her, and with reason, with an haughty ingratitude?

It is in consequence of the deepest reflection, and the most painful conflict, that I am come to a firm resolution never to give my hand to Mons. de Germeuil, and to destroy all his hopes. It is my duty, I am determined on it, but I am at a loss how to write to him. How shall I say to him, forget her who is for ever bound to you by every tie of gratitude? I begin, I blot out; my heart relents in the very first lines; tears stop my hand; when a little calmed, I resume my pen, but cannot please myself with any expressions. That I should be forced to afflict him! the amiable Germeuil! Not a single objection, said he, except it arise from an invincible aversion to me—O God! what will he think?—Farewell, my dear Hortensia; may you never feel the uneasiness which I do.

One in the Morning.

Before I seal my letter, I must subjoin a copy of what I have written to Mons. de Germeuil. And yet I know not whether I shall have resolution enough to send it; it will appear very disobliging, and possibly cruel! He will be angry with me, and how shall

shall I bear that thought? — but it must be. Will not the consciousness of having done my duty lessen the grief which over-whelms me?

Sophia de Valiere.

To Mons. de Germueil.

“ **I** Am extremely unhappy, Sir, not to
“ be able to give you those proofs I
“ could wish of my gratitude. The ho-
“ nour you are pleased to intend an unfor-
“ tunate young creature, as it must ever
“ be present to my memory, so will it al-
“ ways be my greatest comfort under my
“ afflictions; will engage me to watch
“ over my conduct, to approve it such
“ as that you need not blush in secret at
“ the generous resolution you expressed to
“ make me your wife.

“ in happier times, the nephew of Ma-
“ dam d'Auterive, would have found in
“ me an acquiescence capable of flattering,
“ of accomplishing all his wishes; but in
“ that low state to which I am reduced,
“ to avail myself of your kindness, would
“ be to abuse it, to betray you, to justify
“ the

“ the hatred of your relations, and to expose myself to the indignation of all those who love you. By placing me in this humble condition, fate seems to trace out to me the path where I am to walk; I cannot leave it without losing myself. It becomes you, Sir, to travel in a different road.

“ To enter into no other engagements; to live solitary and unknown; to keep alive the remembrance of your kind intentions; to pray for your happiness; these, Sir, are the only marks of esteem, attachment and gratitude, I am at liberty to shew you.

“ Forced to beg of you never to see me more, and to desire to be forgotten by you, may I still presume to assure you of my sincere, my constant, my eternal regard? Oh! be not angry with me, nor blame a young woman who is already too, too miserable; believe me, Sir, had it not been for the change in my situation, you would never have cause to reproach me with that of my heart.”

LETTER XVIII.

YOU displease, you make me angry, my dear Hortensia! Oh! fear it not, your remonstrances do not hurt me, but the reproaches which follow them affect me sensibly. Several expressions in your letter would throw me into the bitterness of repentance, if I were not sure I had conducted myself by principles never made to inspire it.

I never thought my understanding superior to yours, or that I was better acquainted with my duty than Mons. de Germeuil; I never pretended to point out his to him; but flattering myself I was less partial, I thought myself in a better condition to form a right judgment of his situation, and of my own, with the future consequences to us both with which so inconsiderate a step was likely to be attended.

You tell me that the laws of the province * in which his estate lies, put him in possession at one and twenty, of that

* Normandy.

part of his fortune; but can they exempt him from that respect which he owes to himself? Do they allow him to enter into engagements beyond the control of authority? Can they shelter him from the just indignation of Madam de Germeuil; As she may disinherit him at pleasure, do you not imagine she will punish him to the utmost extent of her power?

We pardon, you say, all the faults which love makes us commit. With my little experience, I may venture to assure you of the falsehood of that maxim, at least with regard to women. If the extreme violence of that passion is admitted as an excuse for a sex who are encouraged by their education and natural boldness never to curb their passions, and to sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of indulging them; modesty, and that moderation, the ordinary portion of ours, preclude us from all claim to the like indulgence; it is an unequal conflict, my dear, where conquest is made the indispensable duty of the more timid and weak.

I cannot answer your question; I have never opened the pocket-book of Mons. de Germeuil; it is still in the hands of Pauline; she waits for his orders to transmit it him,

him, and has promised to deliver my answer on that article.

You reproach me with neglecting my affairs : Since the death of my dear, my honoured Protectress, it has been my most serious occupation to consult my true interest. Mistress of my own conduct, and of my will, in spite of my misfortune, I have not renounced the thoughts of conciliating the affection of all about me, and of distinguishing myself, as far as I am able, in this state of dereliction and poverty. A fantastic idea, which my reason rejects, but my heart adopts, would persuade me not to look on myself as a friendless girl, whose conduct is a thing indifferent to every body ; but as a young person removed for a time from her family, whom her relations have placed in the arms of poverty, as in a state of probation. Influenced by this thought, I will hold myself always in readiness to give an exact account of my actions, and in every circumstance of my life, before I yield to the suggestions of my heart ; I will ask myself what answer should I make were I to be asked the motives which determined me.

I will submit to your own reflections, my dear, this disobliging refusal to lie under

der any obligations to my most tender friend. Can I, with decency, accept the services of Mons. de Germeuil? live under the protection of so young a man? owe my dependence to him? inhabit a spacious and pleasant country-seat, where every object would trace out his care and tenderness? How could I avoid his company? With what right could I shut the door of his own house against him? Would it not be highly imprudent to superadd the sense of a just gratitude to that lively and endearing friendship which you yourself call dangerous? He will think me insensible; he will cease to love me; to think of me. And pray, who revealed to you this afflicting truth? Is it by preferring his interest to my own happiness, that I have deserved his indifference?—What shall that friendship congenial with us both lie extinguished in his heart? Oh, no, it will live in his as in mine for ever; he will never forget me:—you forewarn me that he will forget me; you seem, my dear, to lay a great stress on this.—Yes, my letter is gone; for the future direct yours to the Hotel de Terville; Madam de Moncenat lodges at her mother's.

LET.

LETTER XIX.

YOU are not indulgent enough to a heart whose secret motions you think you know. When I become better acquainted with my own real inclination, I shall repent the sacrifice I have made; it shall prove the source of eternal bitterness; I shall reproach myself every day of my life for having blasted my own hopes, and filled with grief the heart of a generous man.

With grief! how the cruel word pierces me to the heart! But why, my dear Hortensia, why, tell me?—why do you strive?—do not endeavour to persuade me.—Oh never present to my idea the sad image of Mons. de Germeuil, afflicted, deeply afflicted! rather repeat to me, he will forget you, he will not think of you; I prefer, without hesitation the mortifying certainty of being banished from his remembrance to the afflicting thought of having filled his heart with grief.

Let us banish, for the future, a subject which affects us in so different a manner. I cannot think of Mons. de Germeuil; o

his proffers, and of my misfortune, without shedding tears: and I am no longer at liberty to allow my heart this unavailing comfort.

I have been these five days at the Hotel de Terville: in the morning I wait on the young Marchioness; I sit down to work with her, and often at the same frame; all this while I am obliged to stifle my sighs, and conceal my deep sadness. After dinner, I am employed in a long gallery in superintending the work of a number of young girls, very awkward in mixing their shades. Madam de Moncenai's maids are busied here in winding the silks, in sharing among them the bobbins of worsted, and in distributing the gold spangles to those who are to work them up. A noisy mirth reigns every where; some sing, others laugh: the small time I am obliged to spend there, appears extremely long and disagreeable.

You are in hopes Madam de Moncenai will distinguish me by her particular notice of me; no such thing; her coldness and indifference render her incapable of such condescension as you mention. It is not her's, but Madam la Comtesse de Ter-ville's good graces that must be cultivated. This

This last lady is still in the country, and no body here seems to desire her return.

But I am in haste as I find I am called down : I might have had a letter from Mons. de Germeuil yesterday; I know not whether I wished it, or feared it, but my heart beat within me all day long. Is it because he may write no more ? What never!—Oh, Hortensia, do you think that he will never write to me ? I wish—Oh ! I know not what to wish ; all my ideas clash and destroy each other ; I cannot fix them. Farewell, my dear, continue to love me.

LET.

LETTER XX.

I Sincerely congratulate you on the advantage you have lately obtained. I look on it as an happy omen of your gaining your law-suit. That provision once granted, will enable you to reimburse your cousin all she has advanced for you. I can easily conceive the kind of relief you speak of: You are in the right, there is perhaps some cunning in lending with an ill grace. We may possibly weaken the sense of gratitude in our debtors, but then we make them extremely eager to get out of our debt.

Can you ask me if I am satisfied with the choice I have fixed on? You whose soul is so sensible, so delicate, were you not apprehensive, my dear, of teasing me by such a question? Does it not carry the mark of a reproach? Formerly you never used to accuse me of obstinacy. Can we properly be said to choose, when necessity imposes that choice; when it leaves us but one path to proceed in?

So near, and yet so far removed from my first condition, how should I be satisfied?

fied? Every thing that presents itself to my eyes, recalls the idea of Madam d'Auterieve's house: I spend the day in a magnificent apartment; pomp, splendor and riches, still shine around me; my eyes still view the same objects, but these no longer make the same impression: the little satisfaction they give to me is a sufficient lesson how different the property in any thing is from the mere enjoyment.

Pleasures, you tell me, will soon reign at Granson, nothing but festivity: Madam de Sauve is to be of the party: your cousin foresees an approaching alliance between the two families: And why, my dear, why does this projected alliance disturb you so much? why occasion so much uneasiness? Mademoiselle de Sauve is well born; she is rich: if heaven have destined her to form the happiness of Mons. de Germeuil, she shall have my most ardent prayers; yes, in the secret of my heart, I shall love, I shall cherish the woman who can make him happy.

No, indeed, he has not written to me. Does not his conduct in this seem singular, and even capricious? My refusal may have provoked him, I confess; but though I should have angered him, should he not have

have written to me! Can friendship be extinguished in an instant? Do there remain no traces of it? mine shall be more lasting. Certain to have deserved the esteem of Mons. de Germeuil, I did hope to obtain it: I flattered myself I should preserve it; receive testimonies of it, not very frequent, indeed, but tender comforting ones; they would have sweetened all the troubles of my life! His neglect, his coldness, even his forgetfulness, shall never destroy my first sentiments; I shall always remember that the nephew of Madam d'Auterive did not forsake me in my misfortune; that he would have altered my situation, and have made me happy! gratitude shall engrave on the bottom of my heart his good intentions, transitory, indeed, but honourable, —worthy the candor and generosity of his soul.

I have already told it you; I should lose my labour in endeavouring to make a friend of Madam de Moncenai; I believe her neither capable of love nor hatred. It is not possible to be prettier, and at the same time less amiable than this lady. The care of her person is her sole occupation; she is so taken up with herself; so little capable of interesting herself for others; so tiresome

tiresome with her perpetual repetitions of the trifling events which concern her only; so fretful at the least alteration in her health; talks so much, and enters into so minute a detail of it; her accounts are so tedious, so disgusting that she tires out her very women: cold and insipid, her beautiful and regular features shew no marks of the least emotion; she will be to-day what she was yesterday; and to-morrow will find her in the same disposition. Amidst the grand circle she lives in, she makes no distinction of persons; the commerce of the world, and fashion, guide her in every thing, and I doubt whether she ever made one single reflection on the little devoirs of society, though she observes them all very punctually.

The absence of her husband, now in Provence, whither he is gone to take possession of a considerable inheritance, subjects her conduct to the authority of the Countess de Teville. Happily for the young Marchioness it is nearly the same thing to follow her own inclinations, or to be guided by those of other people.

Farewell, my dear Hortensia, may you experience, in the sequel of your affairs, the same good fortune you met with last Tuesday.

LET.

LETTER XXI.

WHEN the mind is restless and dissatisfied, it is some kind of amusement, you say to form distant wishes, to direct all our ideas to one object, to divert the hours of our retirement with the illusions of a deep, nay, even pleasing, melancholy. Indeed, my dear, for some time past you have found out amusements of a very extraordinary nature; but I will not attempt to penetrate into the secrets of your heart: when ever you please, I shall comprehend this mysterious language, and then the veil under which you conceal your sentiments, will be removed.

If it is an amusement to form distant wishes, it is not always an advantage to see them accomplished. The instant that brings on the accomplishment of our desires, often destroys a flattering expectation, robs us of a pleasing hope, and delivers us over to that anxiety which a state of doubt and uncertainty kept at a distance.

I must confess, I was passionately desirous to receive a letter from Mons. de Geromeuil:

meuil : I will confess more ; I imagined I had a right to the gratitude of a friend, whose proffers I rejected, from sentiments, rather tender than generous. The care of his happiness alone interested me ; his fortune, his duty, the fear of making him lose the smallest advantages he enjoyed, were the object of my most serious reflections. These alone determined my conduct, and if I did set before your eyes and my own, all the inconveniences that might affect myself ; awaken every apprehension of the future, and open to my view all the sad consequences of my compliance, those were only arts to confirm and strengthen me in my resolution of parting for ever with those ideas of felicity, whose too seducing image returned every instant to my troubled thoughts.

I have received the answer expected with so much emotion and impatience ; I could wish ; yes, I could wish it were still the object of my hope—of my desire : or rather, I wish I had never seen Mons. de Germeuil again, never admitted his visits, to se never written to him.

And why am I not at least free, in my of? present disagreeable situation? why am I not permitted to think, to act, without being exposed to complaints, rather too severe;

severe; to unjust reproaches? Who has subjected my conduct to Mons. de Germeuil? What right has he to blame me? My engaging with Madam de Moncenai offends him; he is hurt by this step; he presumes to accuse me of obstinacy, of mistrust, and almost of ingratitude. How angry I am with him! O! must Mons. de Germeuil be taught how guarded we should be, when we speak to the unhappy, whose sorrow and dejection is apt to dispose the heart to interpret into an unkind and bitter sense, every expression that does not breathe the greatest gentleness and affection.

You involve me, he says, in that contempt you justly entertained of the relations of Madam d'Auterive? Is it possible he can think so? I disdain his assiduity. I expected confound him with those who deserve myance; I hated; my sentiments appear tender, myere still resolutions are cruel. Can the affectingire: or promise of eternal friendship, agree with aons. de desire to be forgotten, with a request nevervisits, to see me any more, and with the inhuman refusal Pauline has just informed him in my? He asks me what prayers I can prey am lsume to put up for him, whilst I take a withoutpleasure in destroying all his hopes of hapther too severe;

pines, and in rendering him the most unfortunate of men ?

Is this reproach to be borne ? Oh, my Hortensia, is this love ? Is this the sentiment which you think my heart too susceptible of ? It is a comfort to me to learn to distinguish its effects ; to assure myself that a passion so undiscerning, so unreasonable, has not found admittance into my heart. And is it not this love which shuts the eyes of Mons. de Germeuil to his own interest ; it conceals from him the force and sincerity of an affection capable of sacrificing every thing — I am vexed, I am mortified ; were I to tell you all, you would partake in my anger. I knew he was warm but never suspected him capable of giving way to this kind of passion.—He thinks despise him, that I hate him !—Oh the ungrateful !—I will think no more of him. I will never write to him, no never

Farewell, my dear, my mind is no calm enough to enter into the particular you desire of me. I am far from happy here : but in what place can I possibly go ?

LETTER XXII.

OH my dear at what a time did I complain of Mons de Germeuil! Alas, those angry expressions, I was offended with, were the effect of a dangerous delirium: the moment he was writing to me, he was at the point of death. Oh Hortensia; the very thoughts of it shock me, —Oh my God! to have lost him, lost him for ever! —What, then would nothing have remained of the most perfect of human beings, but a sad and melancholy remembrance. But he is better, he is well; he will live; heaven vouchsafes to restore him to the prayers of so many hearts interested in his preservation.

Greatly vexed at his departure, and much indisposed on the road, he arrived at last at Granson, in a burning fever. Soon did that terrible distemper, whose very name turns you pale, discover itself; accompanied with every symptom which indicates its malignity, and threatens death. The cries of lamentation filled the castle where so many diversions were preparing. All those trifling friends, whom the hopes of pleasure

sure had drawn together, quickly dispersed. None remained but the Countess, who overcame her natural horror of this contagious distemper. Prostrate near the bed of the beloved patient, her eyes were bathed in tears, and her hands lifted up, imploring the assistance of heaven.—Affectionate mother! her fears, her love, her assiduity her tears revive in me the sense of my former friendship; Oh, I shall love Madam de Germeuil? May the joy she has lately felt never be interrupted by the like apprehensions.

One of the Countess's servants, who returned yesterday to Paris, with one of the Physicians, called to the assistance of Mon de Germeuil, gave Pauline a particular account of this event. 'This pernicious distemper has left no marks on the feature of the Marquis, but his weakness and redness will detain him still a considerable time in the country.

I cannot reflect, without the greatest horror, on the danger which threatened the life of the Marquis de Germeuil. What! my dear, had they come and told me he is dead; he who partook in all the pleasures of my happy childhood; the generous man, whose friendship was never lessened by my fall, would have lived on

ly in a broken heart.—Alas! we suffer with impatience the misfortunes that beset us; we weep, we lament, we think the evil insupportable, and look on it as the greatest imaginable; and yet it is but too true that the greatest grief in our present apprehension may be succeeded by a still greater.

Forgive me, my dear, if in appearing entirely taken up with myself, and my own concerns, I incur the suspicion of neglecting to interest myself in yours. They are not the less present to my thoughts, you cannot possibly doubt it. They tease you; pray who? I am sorry to see you fatigued, tormented, with all these solicitations, which you are obliged to continue. Do not abandon yourself to this kind of despondency: patience is not one of the brilliant virtues; but my daily experience proves to me, that it is the only useful one to him who is possessed of it. How shall I advise you in regard to the projects of your relation? A man capable of choosing you without waiting the decision of your law-suit, deserves at least the esteem of my dear friend. This disinterestedness manifests a noble heart, and yet his assiduity seems troublesome to you. Can it be that the addresses of Mons. d'Arclai are disagreeable to you? And why

Should they make you uneasy? You are independent, and no body has a right to control you.

Your cousin is become less severe: she treats you with greater distinction. Well, my dear, make the most of this agreeable change: without examining the motive of her assiduities which you term almost obliging, turn her good humour to your own account, and endeavour to keep it up by your complaisance. Farewell, my good friend.

L E T.
this
gry

LETTER XXIII.

YOU have reason to complain of my silence ; but then you ought not to be angry with me, my dear. It is true, I have not written to you these two posts. Weak, ill, vexed, not caring to interrupt my work, the fatigue of the day made me husband the hours of the night ; made me postpone every occupation capable of driving away sleep from my heavy eyes. My health grows better, but my heart is grieved, and my mind gives way to new vexations.

I have received two letters from Mons. de Germeuil ; they have sensibly affected me. He asks my pardon for having presumed to write to me at a time when he was not himself ; he cannot recollect the expressions fallen from his pen in the height of his fever ; I return him no answer ! has he been so unfortunate as to offend me ? he trembles at the very idea of having been guilty. He is so if he has displeased me ; he is too severely punished by this long, this alarming silence ! no peevish, no angry expressions, but the sweetest, kindest

G 5 reproaches ;

reproaches ; complaints so tender, prayer so submissive, so warm ; a will so determined to persist in its purposes ; so much zeal in combating, in overthrowing my frivolous objections. Fortune, titles, grandeur, have no charms for him : May I lose all, and gain Sophia, and then this world can offer me nothing worthy to excite my regret.

Oh ! Hortensia, how defend myself against so warm a passion ? he will not believe me indifferent to the happiness of a man to whom I vow an eternal friendship ; he challenges all those titles that I should have honoured him with during the life of Madam d'Auterive.

Into what a perplexity do my own expressions throw me ! What can I say to him ? He hurries, he afflicts me. I know not what secret power assisted me to bear up against his injustice ; I am sure I find myself very weak against his entreaties.— Oh ! why should he love me ? by what fatality do the joy, the felicity of Mons. de Germeuil depend on an unfortunate girl ? Alas ! I dare not consider his love as a good ; it might make some other so happy ; What woman would not be overjoyed to reign over a heart so tender, so delicate.—

Good

Good God! what shall I do, tell me then,
my dear, what would you do?

To my present state of uncertainty, uneasiness, and perplexity, is superadded the apprehension of being very soon under the necessity of seeking some other retreat. Madam de Terville, who arrived twelve days since, has already convinced me, that her character had been but too faithfully drawn to you. Her figure is disagreeable, her air vulgar; she speaks loud, has an imperious tone, with the city manner; is of a suspicious temper, and very sour humour. It was with a kind of affected surprise, very disobliging, and after several useless and ill-natured questions, that she gave me leave to continue my usual custom of retiring to my room during meals. I had the mortification to hear her find fault with Madam de Moncenai, blame her ridiculous condescension, and repeat ten times over, What, Madam de Beaumont's niece not eat in the servants hall! For what reason, I beseech you?

And yet, my youth, and perhaps other considerations, ought not to render this condescension so surprising in the eyes of a lady who is perpetually boasting the regularity of her morals, and giving her own example as a pattern for the whole family.

From

From the moment she comes in to the apartment of Madam de Moncenai, I have the misfortune to fix her attention ; she puts me out of countenance with her look ; she humbles me by her expressions ; I have, she says, neither the air nor the language of a girl accustomed to live by her handi-work ; those about me seem more like my maids than my companions. By this observation, you would imagine her inclined to think advantageously of me ; on the contrary, she thinks very ill of me. To a disposition extremely mistrustful, she adds a very unfavourable opinion of her sex : It is said her own experience formerly taught her both the weakness and frailty of it. I am unwilling to believe it. I was in hopes of being the object of her indifference, and am sorry to find myself the object of her curiosity. She has given positive orders to watch all my actions. Cecily, a young woman attached to her, has had the good-nature to inform me of the employment Madam has honoured her with, as she terms it. I assured her she might fulfil all the duties of it without offending me.

Farewell, my dear Hortensia, you are my only, my whole comfort. How delightful is it to have so tender, so sympathizing a friend ! to think that we may be one day united

united again : This hope supports and re-vives me in my most melancholy moments ; it opens to me an happy futurity, if, however, it be possible for a heart so violently agitated ever to recover that peace, that calm whence all happiness proceeds.

LETTER XXIV.

WHAT a strange employment, my dear Hortensia, to collect together the scattered expressions in my letters ; to examine them ; to put an interpretation on them natural enough, perhaps, but rather irksome and grievous to your friend. Why determine in your own mind ; why endeavour to persuade me, to convince me, that, by a voluntary self-delusion, I disguise and dissemble the real disposition of my soul ?

I, my dear, disguise the nature of my sentiments to you ! if there is a secret in my heart, I do not know it. Oh ! who should induce me to conceal this secret from you ? why do you accuse me now of a reservedness you never suspected me of before ?

My friendship for the Marquis de Germueil, is expressed in my letters with all the marks characteristic of the most tender and disinterested love : I am in love, you are sure, deeply and passionately in love. Passionately ! give me leave not to think so. Doubtless I love Mons. de Germueil ; I love him tenderly ; his person is agreeable

agreeable to me, his wit engages me, his fine qualities affect me, his friendship flatters me ; his sentiments, his intentions enoble me in my own eyes ; nothing would appear hard to me in order to preserve his esteem ; it is dearer to me than my existence. — You are going to repeat to me, your friendship is love. Very well, my dear, I will venture to combat this opinion, and to attack it with the same reasons you make use of in support of it.

If love draw us on with violence ; if it master our souls ; if we cannot oppose any long resistance to its impetuous desires ; if it destroy the wisest resolutions ; if it mock the greatest obstacles ; if it has the art to level every difficulty ; if reflection, prudence, duty, raise but a feeble barrier in its way ; if it break through it in its rapid career : I speak it with confidence, I affirm it with truth, my friendship is not love, has no resemblance to love.

Never, Hortensia, never shall my reason, baffled by that fatal inclination, leave me defenceless : I will never renounce the laws which honour and gratitude impose on me. No, I will not sow trouble and dissention in hearts united by nature and sacred ties : The unhappy girl, adopted by Madam d'Auterive, shall never light the

the brand of discord in the breasts of the family. I will respect the niece of my generous protectress! her heirs have abandoned me, have cast me off, but they shall not despise me. Forgotten by them, and by the whole world, I will not awaken the remembrance of my unfortunate birth by a step inconsiderate, bold, and capable of ruining him who urges me to it. The adopted child of a worthy lady shall preserve, at least, the rich inheritance which cannot be torn from her; an inviolable attachment to her duty, and the comforting certainty of being always able to say to herself, My misfortune is the effect of chance, and not of my own imprudence.

Madam de Terville seems bent on vexing and mortifying me. She has just sent to make me a most ridiculous proposal in very disobliging terms. Oh! how would Mons. de Germeuil be humbled if he knew the dispositions of that lady with regard to the person whom he would honour with the name of his companion. Farewell, my dear, in a short time I shall write to you oftener. Every thing tells me I shall not be long here.

LETTER XXV.

IT is now two in the morning: I should in vain attempt to taste the sweets of sleep, which will not visit this noisy * hotel for some time; every thing is in an incessant hurry and confusion, and I doubt whether they are ever acquainted here with peaceful rest.

To-morrow I quit this house, and that without any regret: I am sorry to be obliged to enter into the particulars of this disagreeable quarrel; but I must inform you why Madam de Terville dismisses me, or, to express myself better, shamefully turns me away from her daughter's service. Would you believe it, my dear, she wants to marry me! This haughty domineering woman, pretends that her pleasure, or slightest caprices, are to be laws to all about her; and to refuse to submit to them, is, in her eyes, an unpardonable crime.

From the very first days of my entering into this service, Madam de Terville's

* The name of noblemen's houses at Paris.

housesteward, a man somewhat in years, seemed very assiduous to oblige me: he got another room added to my little apartment; it was furnished by his directions; his servants would wait on me; I rewarded their zeal without imagining the motive of it: This man usually spent part of the afternoon in the gallery, and amused himself with seeing the people at work; he often spoke to me; his age and complaisance induced me to give him polite answers. A little before the arrival of the Countess, one of Madam de Moncenai's women came to me into my chamber: after a long discourse, whose drift I could not at all comprehend, but which seemed to promise a very interesting discovery, this woman acquainted me that Mons. Ballin was very rich, very good-natured, master of his own fortune, free in his choice, and found himself disposed to make my fortune, and to settle the whole of it on me, if I would consent to marry him.

You may easily guess how much this proposal, which she looked on as so advantageous, mortified and disgusted me: my discontented countenance, my absolute refusal, surprised her; she insisted on it, and I had much ado to persuade her that Mons. Ballin's offers would be all to no purpose.

Far

Far from being discouraged, this man persisted ; he set the whole family to solicit me : every body found the effects of his ill humour ; Madam de Moncenai's maids began to banter him ; when Madam de Terville returned home, her's did the same, vexation and passion soured the poor old man's temper, at first they laughed at it, afterwards they complained of it : Madam de Terville was told the cause of her steward's moroseness ; she fell into a most violent fury with him, sent for him, called him madmam, and would have discharged him : He confessed his extravagant love, threw himself at the feet of his mistress, put her in mind of his long, his faithful services, and besought her to give me to him as the reward of his attachment to her interest.

By a consequence of the inconceivable caprice of this lady, far from being angry at the confession of her old servant, she found his case quite affecting, promised to end the matter to his liking, forbid her maids to rally Mons. Ballin, cried out an hundred times over, Alas, poor man ! and immediately sent to let me know she required me to marry him, and ordered me to think seriously of it.

I had

Far

I had just received this odd message when I wrote to you last ; I was in hopes that Madam de Terville would not be so unjust as to imagine she had a right to dispose of me ; I was mistaken ; yesterday in the evening she sent for me to attend her ; she was undressing when I came into her room ; I will not repeat to you what she said, nor my answers ; my disobedience exciting her indignation, she flew into a violent passion with me without moderation, and I may say without decency : My figure, my air, the delicacy of my features, were the subject of her keenest raillery ; she exclaimed against the caprice of nature, that such creatures as I should have so many useless charms ? she cruelly asked me, who I was, and whence I came : who inspired me with the pride of opposing her will ? what I meant by turning the head of a man who belonged to her, and whose courtship was an honor to me ; she did not intend he should grow quite mad : I might chuse either to marry him, or leave the house immediately.

I wept bitterly, I said nothing, my boldness seemed unsupportable ; she discharged me, forbidding me to appear before her any more. As I was going out of the room, somebody spoke, probably in my behalf,

behalf, for I heard the Countess answer, Good God ! the world is full of these female adventures, of these proud beggars, who, by the help of a tolerable face, and a story ready prepared, might engage one in their behalf, were one to be off one's guard ; what is her air, her education, her modesty, her wit to me ? let her obey me, or go out of doors.

To-morrow I propose returning to good Madam de Beaumont's ; I shall resume my former employment, I shall be free from control ; no body will dispute with me the incontestable right of following the dictates of my own will.

In my misfortune, two valuable possessions are left me honor and liberty. How can I deprive myself of the one, so necessary to the preservation of the other ? Is not liberty the source of courage ; of that inward sentiment which supports us amidst our sufferings, and renders our firmness victorious over our wrongs ? Despondency must be the natural consequence of extreme dependence. In such a situation, we insensibly lose the habit of resisting ; we accustom ourselves to support humiliation, and to suffer injuries ; we continue to blush at the insult, but no longer find strength of mind to repel it. Oh, in spite of my poverty I will never reduce myself to this abject state.

I keep

I keep my letter unsealed;—to morrow, when I am in my old habitation, I will communicate to you the new proposals of Mons. de Germeuil; they would agree well enough with my taste; but an unsurmountable difficulty prevents my yielding to his request. Why should I be obliged to contradict every wish of so dear a friend? Oh! how I should like to be able to testify my compliance.

Eleven at night.

All is changed, my dear, I am still at the Hotel de Terville; I am kept here; I am promised to be used with kindness, and in spite of my reluctance to stay, I could not avoid sacrificing my resentment to so obliging and singular a character as hers, who, to use her own words, has taken me under her protection.

At ten in the morning I had packed up my trunks, and was going down with a design to send them away, when Cecily, that young favourite of Madam de Terville, who had orders to observe me, met me, and stopping me on the stairs; You are very late, Mademoiselle, said she, in your attendance on the young Marchioness; she has been at her frame above this quarter of

of an hour, and will be surprised to see you so remiss.

After what passed yesterday in your presence, I answered, I have no business in Madam de Moncenai's closet : Her mother ordered me to begone, and this is the only one of all her orders which I am disposed to obey. You do not know, then, said she, that her orders are nothing here without mine ? You shall stay, I insist on it ; I order it : You must put away that sorrowful look, and stay where you are.

I did not much relish this kind of joking ; she perceived it, took my hand, and, leading me gently along, forced me to go into my chamber. Seeing my eyes filled with tears, Oh fie, what a child, said she in an endearing accent, What, because a woman is ridiculous, fantastic or ill-natured, must you cry ? it is very silly : Do as I do, you will live easily with Madam de Terville. By shewing a perfect tranquillity in those moments when she strives to vex me, I deprive her of the pleasure of tormenting me : she loves, hates, caresses, and chides me twenty times in a day : I contemplate, without emotion, the extreme variety of her humour, and it amuses me. She flies into passions, scolds, calms, and composes herself ; I, for my part, still unmoved, and

and even-tempered, preserve the advantage which, my good spirits give me over her, and without admitting it, she is forced to yield to. By being mistress of myself, I am able to alter her conceits; I guide her as I like; she says what she pleases, does what I would have her, and all is well.

I congratulate you, Mademoiselle, said I, on having discovered a way to live contented with Madam de Terville; my temper would not bend so easily — You must alter this temper, replied she with warmth; you have an elevated soul, and sensibility of heart; useless advantage! in every condition of life, these two qualities are prejudicial to happiness; you are out of your proper place, it is easy to see this; and so am I, perhaps, but a happy turn of mind makes me look with cheerfulness on every thing that raises melancholy reflections in you. It is prudent to try to diminish the weight of one's suffering; to adopt new ideas in a new situation; if we cannot avoid suffering, there are, at least, comforting compensations for all the ills of life. For instance, it is no very agreeable situation to be the humble friend of Madam de Terville; to owe every thing, not to her goodness, but to the necessity she finds of having me with her: but it would be still more mortifying to be like her, to be as old,

old, and to have her features and her humour. Whilst I hear or look at her, I reckon myself happy to be Cecily. But I will not detain you longer, continued she; come down, Madam de Moncenai desires, Madam de Terville orders, and I beseech you to do it. All is gay, all is smiling here; the Marquis de Terville, who arrived last night, has overjoyed the heart of his mother: I will see you again this evening; we will have some talk together: You have need of my lessons; I will teach you the art that makes the rich and great happy; it is this, to love one's self; to have a great value for one's self; to look down on all nature besides; and to consider others as created entirely for our use or amusement.

I stood out long against her intreaties and her caresses; she removed every difficulty which I opposed to her desires; she strengthened me against my apprehensions: You shall never hear any more of the steward, said she. Yesterday, at her coucher, the Countess was determined to protect him; I thought proper to approve of the union she intended; by degrees I began to banter; a happy expression I used threw her into a fit of laughter; all her compassion vanished; the poor love sick Bal-

lin struck her fancy as a foolish, doating old fellow, who had the assurance to court a pretty young girl, who might do a great deal better for herself: Poor Sophia!—she was perfectly in the right to refuse him: that moment she ordered her upper chambermaid to forbid him thinking any more of you, speaking to you, looking at you, or even coming into the gallery when you are there; and I am ordered to bid you stay. A never-failing method to cure people of their partiality, is to throw an air of ridicule on the object which inspires it; for the misfortune of human nature, this weapon is too often employed on occasions where it becomes the greatest cruelty.

I have yielded, my dear, I have suffered myself to be guided by Cecily. The Marchioness received me with an air of kindness; I should have been sorry to lose you, said she, but I was almost sure that Cecily would find some method to appease my mother. This speech moved me; I answered by making a profound courtesy; I was unable to speak. Madam de Ter-ville saw me after dinner; she seemed not to remember she had been angry: at the first sight of her my heart felt a strange emotion; I find I can never forget her haughtiness and her injustice. I thought

to have said somewhat about Mons. de Germeuil, but it is late, I must endeavour to get some rest, and this letter is already very long. Farewell, my dear Hortensia.

LETTER XXVI.

I AM sorry for having made you uneasy by repeating the harsh expressions of Madam de Terville: so long as I stay in this house, the rembrance of so mortifying a scene will never be erased from my memory. I cannot look upon that lady, nor even hear the sound of her voice, without feeling a disagreeable emotion. But then, my dear, whither can I go? hurried away by a sudden resentnent, I was for returning to Madam de Beaumont's; but I had forgotten my reasons for leaving her. Things continue the same; the motives which obliged me to leave her, still subsist in their full force. Mons. de Germeuil writes me word of his speedy return to Paris; he has not given over his designs: his obstinacy, and my own weakness, frighten me, make me dread to see or hear him.

On reading his letters, one would imagine he never opened mine; he writes to me, but never answers me. I imagined him less eager, less wedded to his own notions. Must I, in order to eradicate a fruitless passion from his heart, make a new sacrifice?

sacrifice ? deprive myself of the only comfort of my life ; appear insensible, ungrateful, and put an end by my silence, to a correspondence which is dear to me ; must I absolutely break with him ? Oh, this would be a most cruel necessity indeed ! What, conceal all my sentiments from him, and even hide the effects of a tender, an innocent friendship !

After having wearied myself with reflections on the interest of Mons. de Germeuil ; on the impossibility of connecting it with his desires ; when I think him convinced of the reasonableness, and the force of my objections ; when I imagine he is going to tell me, very well, let us be only friends, he exacts a formal promise of me to be his ; he conjures me to give him a written one, and to send it to him. If I grant him this request, it will set his mind at ease, calm his anxious breast, and will enable him to wait, with patience, the accomplishment of his happiness, from time and more favourable events. In his last letter, he marks out for me a plan of conduct which I should like to fix upon ; I would follow it, were it possible for me to carry it into execution without his assistance. He begs I would chuse some convent to retire to with Pauline and her niece. He will visit

me often if I give him leave ; seldom if I require it. He insists upon this proposal, and on my immediately quitting the hotel de Terville. He trembles at the dangers to which my stay here exposes me, he fears some, of which I can have no idea.

Oh my dear Hortensia ! ever since the fatal moment when I lost Madam d'Auterive, my every wish has been for such a retreat as he presses me to make choice of. I should be very happy to live in one, to shut myself up in it for ever, and there to spend the remainder of my days. At the moment of my taking my last leave of the world. I might dare to open my heart to Mons. de Germeuil ; he would then become acquainted with those sentiments in me he complains of ; he would no longer reproach me with a cruel indifference.

By what strange caprice inseparable from my destiny, am I not permitted to expect from a friend, so eager to serve me, the only favour which decency will allow me to receive at his hands : Oh ! I would not blush to accept from the nephew of Madam d'Auterive, the small sum necessary to gain me admittance into a convent, and to place me there for life. In those very moments when I afflicted him by rejecting his offers ; I wished an hundred, and an hundred

hundred times, to communicate my desires for that purpose; my knowledge of his love withheld me then, and still does withhold me. Would it be reasonable—would it be generous, to ask the only favour he cannot possibly grant me, without doing a manifest violence to his every sentiment.

I this moment received your two letters. I am very sorry for what you tell me in the last. What my dear, a new incident will perhaps retard the decision, you had been flattered with, and which you were told would soon take place? But can they go back to settlements of so old a date? This unjust request will never be allowed I hope. You are always in my thoughts: your slightest sufferings give me pain; my heart is afflicted, I partake in your uneasiness, your tears. Oh, if at least one of us were happy! but on that supposition, should we not be both so?

LETTER XXVII.

YOUR first lines have dissipated my fears; I learn with pleasure the issue of so flagrant an attempt; you have carried it; this is a second advantage, and the favourable disposition of the judges appears to me a certain proof of the goodness of your cause.

Cecily's liking for me, inspires you with the same sentiments for her: her humour pleases you, and makes you desire to be better acquainted with her. I am sorry it is not in my power to satisfy your curiosity in regard to her: her birth and adventures are alike unknown here. Before she came to the hotel, she lived at a convent, where Madam de Terville had a niece, a boarder. Cecily, being in great intimacy with the young relation of the Countess, presented herself to her, was approved of, and consented to accept of the place of humble friend, in the room of another whose recent loss gave Madam de Terville some uneasiness, and even some perplexity.

As to her figure, it is impossible to conceive a prettier. I do not know whether I can

can easily give you a just idea of her: one would think that the graces themselves took delight in forming her: neither short nor tall, the most exact proportion gives ease and nobleness to all her motions; just flesh enough to heighten the natural freshness of her complexion, without in the least spoiling the elegance of her shape; her features are not so regular, as they are perfectly well marked; she has an ingenuous countenance, an arch look, a decisive manner, wit, vivacity, an accomplished education, and great acuteness. She observes with attention, judges without mercy, and censures with severity, at least it appears so to me. I can hardly think the men capable of these excesses, which she accuses them of. Her empire over the mind of the Countess makes the whole hotel subject to her will: she governs, but she obliges; her power always employed to the advantage of others, is not the object of envy; as her continuance in favour surprises every body, people endeavour to discover the cause of it, and this is what I have been able to gather with a view to impart it to you.

The countess has not lived always in France. During the life of Mons. de Terville, she was at Naples, Madrid, Vienna

H 5 " and

and Rome, where he was successively Ambassador. She has kept up a correspondence in all the different courts, where that able negotiator acquired the highest consideration: her house is still open to all strangers, who are introduced to her by the ministers of their Princes: they look on her as one of the rarities they are to see in France. And yet in the eyes of her countrymen, Madam de Terville presents nothing worthy of their curiosity, or of conciliating the suffrage of other nations. They allow her that good breeding which persons brought up in courts habitually contract: they find in her a sufficient knowledge of the world, abundance of small talk, very little wit, with vast pretensions, and unsupportable vanity. But out of her own country, she is called a celebrated woman; people think themselves happy to correspond with her; her letters are sought after, shewn, copied, handed about, admired! shall I tell you all? They say, but perhaps it is a calumny, but they say that she never had skill enough to write a single note; that she neither understands her own language, nor the language of the countries where she has lived; that she owes all her brilliant reputation, to the lady whose place Cecily now occupies: it is certain

certain this young woman is continually writing; she has no other employment, and on post days Madam de Terville shuts herself up with her. If this is not so, appearances are certainly against her.

No, Mons. de Germeuil is not arrived: his mother, who is a little indisposed, keeps him still at Granson. He writes often to me: he is always complaining of me, and even with some bitterness. I foresee, it will be impossible for me to avoid coming to a rupture with him, however afflicting. He is sometimes so unreasonable, and so firmly adheres to his own opinion! Oh! Hortensia, the men obstinately persist in what they demand: their very submission is tyranny: they urge with an indiscreet ardour; they dare even to exact, to threaten. Mons. de Germeuil tells me he will give over writing to me—Well, let him give over, let him abandon me; may I never be moved, vexed, ruffled by his unjust reproaches—I wished to preserve his friendship, you know it my dear, the utmost of my desires was confined to some slight marks of his remembrance. If these are refused me, I shall doubtless be grieved; but though weak enough to regret them, I will not be so mean as to court them; I will

will not purchase the pleasure of being beloved by a complaisance criminal in my own eyes. As I cannot, as I ought never to be Mons. de Germeuil's, I will not put myself in a state of dependence on him; I will not contract any voluntary obligations: I will accept none of his assistance, since I am in a situation to support myself without being beholden for it to any.

You ask me whether Mons. de Terville is agreeable: indeed I cannot tell; though I always see him some part of the day at his sister's. If I may believe Cecily, he is a young fellow exceeding vain, giddy, very forward, and very impertinent. She paints the Marquis de Moncenai in colours not much more to his advantage. He appeared to me cold and sullen; she pretends he is mad. His outward appearance, she says is grave and solemn; he errs by method; fancies himself a wit, philosopher, politician, capable of reforming every order in the state. They who really possess the qualities which he enjoys only in his own imagination, find him out to be ignorant, head-strong, talkative, and always tiresome. You must not, however, entirely rely on the judgment of Cecily; for as

as I have already told you, she is not over
and above charitable.

Farewell my dear, accept my tender
congratulations on your new hopes.

L E T.

LETTER XXVIII.

HOW disagreeable it is, my dear Hortensia, to live in a station entirely different from that for which the habits contracted in our early education utterly disqualify us: not to be able to carry consequence enough by mere outside, or to conciliate the regard of the world, by any other than some internal qualities, often liable to the suspicion of affectation, and always of little consideration in the eyes of those who possess them not.

The Marquis de Terville honours me with a particular attention; which is become extremely irksome and disagreeable to me. He is determined, he says, to court me in form; as my little vanity seems to exact it. Since his return, he has precisely driven to despair twenty pretty young women, in order to oblige one ingrate, who hardly takes notice of his assiduity, or, at least, affects not to be pleased with it. He begins to wonder, and even to be angry at my coldness. Indifference is prejudicial to beauty; my modesty, my reserve, are precious graces it is true; my blushes heighten

heighten the lustre of the finest complexion in the world: but so much severity may cast a gloom over my charms, and weaken their impression; it gives me the air of being neither acquiescing, nor sociable. We raise our eyes, we look, we listen, and we answer; silence and disdain determine nothing, and end in nothing; does Minerva's gravity suit with the form of Hebe?

This insipid stuff, tires and provokes me. Madam de Moncenai hears all this, and is vastly diverted with it. She cannot see why all this little bantering should make me angry. Her brother's boldness and impudence, are no more than a charming vivacity in her eyes. If chance throw me in the way of the Marquis de Moncenai, he stops me whether I will or no, and addresses me much in the same language.

Cecily endeavours in vain to keep me here; the house becomes insupportable to me. Since the arrival of her husband, the Marchioness sees a great deal more company. When she does not go out, she obliges me to work all day in her great closet; she's eternally going in and out: every body comes to admire her work and mine. Thus exposed to the eyes of

so

so many people, I shall hardly escape being known. Some relation or friend of Madam d'Auterive may see me, and inform Madam de Terville of my sad adventure: to be unfortunate is no recommendation to that lady, and the uncertainty of my condition would draw on me fresh insults from her.

You take part with Mons. de Germeuil; you think I ought to accept of a sure asyle, a decent retreat. You ask me if I am very sure that I do not deserve the reproach of an excessive pride? Am I not unjust in taking such high offence at the complaints of the Marquis? You press me to examine myself seriously. If a person distinguished by her noble turn of mind, annexes the idea of shame to the accepting a generous offer; you desire me to inform you, what kind of merit that must be, which can excite and keep up a spirit of benevolence, in a compassionate mind, since according to my principles as you say, there is no obliging any but the meanest and worst of men?

By promising to partake one day with you in the fortune you expect, and by giving you my word to live with you, I imagine

gine my dear, I have answered that question. I am sensibly affected, but not humbled with your offers; I have promised to accept from your hands the assistance which I obstinately refused to owe to Mons. de Germeuil. In my present situation, I would accept, without hesitation, the protection, the favours of one of my own sex. Believe me Hortensia, misfortunes have not soured my temper; have not made me inflexible. I aspire not to the vain glory of distinguishing myself by an affectation of a disinterestedness against nature: men do not prefer, through taste, labour to rest, indigence to affluence, slavery to liberty: I have not an exalted mind, I do not aim at chimerical virtues, but circumstances do not permit us always to adopt general maxims, and often impose on us particular obligations.

Allow me, my dear, to ask you a question in my turn. How must I conduct myself in regard to Mons. de Germeuil, if yielding to his intreaties, I should accept of a retreat, where every comfort must be the fruit of his liberality? what proof should I dare to give him of my gratitude? We do in some measure repay the good we

we have received, by attachment, by complaisance, and by a continual attention to gratify, and even to prevent the wishes of those whom we have consented to be obliged to. In my situation, forced to withstand perpetually, the wishes of the man, who means to make my whole life a scene of happiness, must I then resolve to appear insensible to his goodness? He would make me easy and happy! whilst I cannot, must not, do any thing for him! how often shall I tell you, my dear friend; how often repeat, that I will never accept of obligations which I cannot possibly return, without being wanting to my benefactor or to myself?

I beg of you, no more to renew a subject which appears to us under such different lights. Let us for ever put an end to this long dispute. I do not like to oppose your notions; I should think myself surer of the propriety of my own, were you to approve them. Your reflections throw me into doubt, and uncertainty; I fear to err; I have need to recollect every moment that you love me too well, to be impartial between Mons. de Germeuil and myself; if you desired my happiness less than

than you do, you would not be so much inclined to blame my refusal. Farewell, my dear, I am not angry. Oh my God ! can I ever be angry with you ?

L E T.

LETTER XXIX.

WHAT a long story am I going to tell you, my dear Hortensia; what different emotions of the mind, does the short space of one day bring about! This morning, humbled, distressed, I was giving myself over to the most cruel reflections; the world presented to my view nothing but hard-hearted or wicked persons: this evening, in an hour of comfort, and pleasing sensations, I admire the astonishing difference of the mind, of the heart, of the sensations of those mortals, so like in appearance, and yet so distinguished by the surprising variety of their principles and manners.

A little before noon, Madam de Moncenai left me alone in her closet, while she went to her mother, where the Marquis de Monglas waited for her: the instant she went out, his valet de chambre presented me a letter, which he said he had orders to deliver to me. Deceived by the manner of the folding, and thinking one man alone had any pretensions to write to me; without examining either the arms, or hand, I immediately

immediately broke it open. How shall I express my anger, my indignation. The letter was from the Marquis de Terville.

Presumptuous man! dare to write to me, dare to propose a private interview to talk to me of his love, to concert proper measures to carry on, and to conceal our secret correspondence. My eyes assure him that my heart is not insensible, which gives him real satisfaction. This impudent fellow imagined he was able to dazzle me, by his insolent offers : he presumed to make a merit of his wicked intentions, of placing me in the class of those rich and contemptible women, who shamelessly making a figure with the wages of their wickedness, become the jest of one sex, and the disgrace of the other.

Hurried on by a violent emotion, I ran, I flew to the apartment of Madam de Terville : Cecily was coming out of her chamber ; she stopped me at the door, and pulling me into a closet, pressed me to let her know the cause of the extreme confusion she saw me in.

Oppressed, all in tears, unable to utter a word, I gave her the odious letter : she ran it over without seeming surprised, repeating, my God! still the old stuff over again! and looking on me with a sedate countenance ;

countenance ; if nonsense and impudence, said she, shock you to such a degree, and afflict you so extremely, you do not seem to lay out for an easy and happy life. What mean this confusion, these tears? What do you reproach yourself with? I have received twenty from the same hand, all of them in the like impertinent strain : Mons. de Terville knows not to this very hour, whether I ever read them. It is doing a coxcomb too much honour, to shew him any resentment ; you should never let him see that it is in his power to give you the least emotion. He is not always awed by wisdom, but contempt is a sure way to get rid of him. And pray what was your design, by going to the Countess, continued she? Did you mean to shew her this letter, and to demand justice of her ; did you expect any reparation for this outrage? If you did, you must have very little knowledge of the world ! do you know in what light Madam de Terville will view these offensive proposals? Why she will see the danger of her son's forming such a connexion, attended with a vast expence ; the protracting, or even breaking off the intended match, about which she is now in treaty with her niece ; she will be displeased with you, for being the object of his passion ;

sion ; she will fear you, and hate you ; she will look on you as an artful designing girl ; she will suspect you of wanting to dazzle her, to deceive her, and to conceal from her your real sentiments ; she will consider your tears as artifice, and your resentment as affectation ; it is well if she do not accuse you of enveigling, and seducing her son : as He is not to be in the wrong, You certainly must : a kind of prisoner here, and forced to live under the eyes of the Countess, you will meet with a thousand mortifications, and if you should try to leave the house and make your escape, perhaps she will have recourse to violent methods to make sure of you.

Why then Mademoiselle, cried I, why did you force me to stay in a house where innocence and misery can hope for no protection ? I will leave it this instant, quit it for ever. Kept like a prisoner here ? who dares keep me ! Let me alone, let me alone, said I, struggling to get from her, while she held me by my gown. Far from yielding to my request, she continued to hold me, and to beg me to hear her, when the door opening, a lady came in calling Cecily, and chiding her at the same time, for having made her wait for a music book she had desired her to bring her.

Struck

Struck with the sound of her voice, I looked on her; sweetness, grace and benignity shed a thousand charms over those features, I now recollect: considering them attentively, I endeavoured to find out whether I did not view in the niece of Madam de Terville, in the Marchioness de Monglas, that amiable Henrietta d'Alby, formerly our companion in the convent, whose sad but interesting melancholy had so deeply affected us both.

A moment removed all my doubts; scarce had Madam de Monglas cast a look towards the side of the room where I was, when crying out with surprize and joy, she ran to me with open arms; it is Mademoiselle de Saint-Aulay; it is my dear Sophia, she frequently repeated, pressing me to her bosom: what! to find you here, at my aunt's; you, my old, my beloved companion! what felicity, how I rejoice at this happy meeting.

Struck with her friendship, moved with her kindness, charmed to see her in a condition so different from that which she once dreaded, and yet unable to speak, awed by the distance which time and events had put between us, I dared not to give way to the emotions of my heart; I embraced her with timidity; I was silent; I could scarce

scarce refrain from tears, or hide my confusion.

She perceived my perplexity, but mistaking the cause, what ! Mademoiselle, said she, do you not know me ; You no longer remember that Henrietta, whose sorrows you once soothed with so much goodness ? Whom you left in the utmost affliction at your loss ; at seeing you quit the convent where she was doomed to spend her days ? to whom you gave, a few days after your departure, so distinguishing a mark of the most generous attention ?—I still keep that beautiful basket embroidered with your own hands, and filled with so many pretty trinkets. My parents cruelly refused me those superfluities, which they termed worldly ; I passionately longed for them : the pleasure of setting myself off with them, seemed to me then as a sovereign good. I was not even allowed to write to you, or to see you again ; all correspondence without the walls was forbidden me ; I could not express my gratitude to you, it lived only in my heart ; your idea has always been present to my memory, and I must own I see with grief the small impression I have made on yours.

Alas, cried I, stung with this reproach, I know you well, Madam, your features are

no strangers to my eyes; the sound of your voice even moved my heart: pardon this reserve, which seems to offend you, in a poor unhappy girl, who has now neither companions, nor friends: alone, abandoned, without any retreat, any support, she fears to be thought too familiar, by shewing her sensibility; believe me Madam, my sentiments are the same, but my fortune is changed, and that prevents me from expressing myself without constraint.

Poor and forsaken! repeated the Marchioness; who? you my lovely Sophia! you the heiress to an immense fortune! you, adored by a family so rich, so powerfully allied. Did I understand you well? without protection, without any retreat! Oh, good God! and sitting down on a So-pha, and placing me by her, explain this strange discourse to me, said she, in the most affectionate accent; conceal nothing from me, I deserve your confidence, you shall find me worthy of it: Oh! do no fancy yourself without a companion, without a friend; my heart challenges both titles: speak, my dear, speak; sure to interest me, to find that I partake in all your afflictions, you may with safety pour them forth into my bosom.

Oh Hortensia, how sweet, how consoling are the expressions of a tender humanity! how much did I find myself affected with the goodness of the Marchioness. The presence of Cecily did not prevent the effusions of my heart: which freely expanded itself: a concise recital of the events which reduced me to live with Madam de Moncenai, laid open my situation to Madam de Monglas; I did not blush before her, at being unfortunate: but humbled more by the proposals of the Marquis de Terville, than by my poverty, I doubted whether I should shew her that insolent letter. But giving it her at last, I begged of her to engage the Countess to let me depart that instant, without obliging me to explain the motives of my sudden retreat.

I shall easily obtain that favour of my aunt, said she in an endearing accent; but my dear Sophia, on quitting this house, you must come and live at mine. I think myself happy to be able to offer you an asylum; to place you beyond the reach of those dangers to which your situation, youth and beauty expose you: like you, I have experienced the misfortune of being indifferent to every body: Slighted by my parents, and destined to a monastic life, the habitual sadness of my heart has rendered

dered it susceptible of compassion: I shall never forget the time in which I wished to inspire others with it; and the excellent man, whose goodness changed my fortune; whose liberal hand has loaded me with favours, is delighted to see me extend my own felicity to every object worthy to partake of it. Come and increase my happiness: the pleasure of seeing you easy and contented, will redouble it. You will find a protector, a father, in Mons. de Monglas; and a sister, an attentive friend, in his happy wife.

Oh! what sentiments moved my heart whilst Madam de Monglas was speaking to me, and pressing me to answer her; I fancied I still heard the sweet inflections of the voice of Madam d'Auterive; I saw her goodness exemplified in the young Marchioness; the same candor shone in her countenance. Surprised, melted, penetrated, my warm emotion would not allow me to express my thoughts. I bathed with tears her hand which held mine. I accept your generous invitation, Madam, said I with ardour; I accept it without hesitation: Pardon me if my tears are the first testimony of my gratitude: Suffer me—She interrupted me, and embracing me again and again, it is I, my dear friend, it is I who am the obliged

obliged person, said she: ever since my happy marriage, I have wished for a companion of my own age, whose temper and principles might be agreeable to Mons. de Monglas, not trouble the order established in his family, and give into all the amusements he is fond of. Our meeting is a new stroke of that good fortune which of late seems to smile on me: Next to the pleasure of seeing you in your former brilliant and fortunate condition, I can find nothing more agreeable to my wishes than the opportunity of serving you. I leave it to Cecily to introduce you to the acquaintance of Mons. de Monglas; she is acquainted with every thing that concerns us both: but I am in haste, added she rising, I will go and beg you of my aunt. As her son expects a very important service from Mons. de Monglas. I am sure of her consent. The Marquis de Terville is going, with me, to Versailles; he will stay there several days: To-morrow I am to bring back Mons. de Monglas. I must give him notice of my purpose, though I do not at all doubt his consent. Get yourself ready, my dear friend, for on Sunday evening I will come and fetch you; and towards the end of the week we shall set out for Malzais, a charming seat, where we are to spend

part of the summer. I strove in vain to speak of her goodness, and the sentiments she excited in my breast : She always stopped me with the most endearing caresses; and, bidding me farewell, embraced me with inexpressible tenderness, after recommending me to Cecily's care, she went back to Madam de Terville.

I retired to my chamber; I would have written to you that moment, but found myself too much moved.

Hortensia, my dear Hortensia, what happy fortune directed me to Madam de Monglas! How could she preserve the remembrance of a slight favour which I had forgotten these three years?—Did I tell you, that she spoke of you; that she loves you still?—But it is very late. I kept Cecily with me a considerable time: I was desirous to learn of her the particulars of the fortune of Madam de Monglas. She told me in confidence that the Countess de Terville had made her draw them up in writing for an absent friend, and she has promised me a copy of her little packet. I asked her leave to insert it in my letter, and have obtained it under the seal of secrecy. It is extremely proper I should make you acquainted with those protectors whom heaven

heaven has sent to the assistance of your friend.

Ten in the Morning.

Madam de Terville consents to let me go with Madam de Monglas ; I forgot to mention it to you. The following is Cecily's account, which you will send me back, when you have read it. Farewell, my dear, partake in my joy and hopes.

Cecily's Packet.

THE Marquis de Monglas, born to an opulent fortune, was by nature endowed with these happy dispositions, which lead us not to look upon riches, as an advantage capable of supplying the place of study and reflection. Master of himself, after having devoted twenty years to the service of his king, he was resolved to improve the remainder of his life to the best purposes. On his return home, a philosophic spirit succeeded his love of arms: inflamed with a desire to see, to learn, to refine his taste, and enlarge his ideas, he quitted France, and after visiting all the courts of Europe, crossed the seas, wandered over all the barbarous nations, and penetrated to where greedy avarice did once open its guilty way, through the blood of millions, to gorge the rich with superfluities, and give the poor a sense of wants unknown before.

Eighteen years were spent in his travels; he was bordering on his sixtieth, when he revisited the coasts of France. On seeing them, he sighed! time must have carried off

off many of his friends : the little hopes of meeting again those who were dearest to his heart, made him tremble on his arrival in Paris ; but he had the good fortune to find himself among the persons whom he most valued : one of these was the Count d'Alby, brother to Madam de Terville, his old fellow collegian, and brother soldier, the partner of his youthful pleasures, and the object of his constant friendship.

During the absence of M. de Monglas, the Count married and became the father of several children, but being busied with the cares of the world, and ambitious projects, he could no longer participate with his peaceful and disinterested friend, the pleasures of their former intimacy. However the extreme easiness of the Marquis, and his natural sweetness of disposition, made him readily comply with all sorts of tempers. The alteration in his friend did not estrange him from him. It was then about the beginning of autumn ; the Count was setting off with all his family for Chazel, an estate of his, wherein he took great delight : Mons. de Monglas promised to pay him a visit there, after he had fulfilled some indispensable obligations, and

allowed some time to the settlement of his affairs

As he had travelled without any great retinue, and lived privately, he was able to lay up above two thirds of his income, during his absence. He might have enlarged his estate ; but his taste did not lie that way ; he appropriated his savings to purposes more agreeable to a sensible and generous heart. After a month's stay at Paris, he set off with a design to spend a week at Chazel ; but was detained at the Count d'Alby's by the emotions of a tender compassion, and the desire of freeing an unfortunate young lady from the cruel condition of life which her parents were preparing for her.

The Count's family consisted of three sons and an only daughter. One of the sons, who had no other advantage over his brothers, but that of having been born first, had the sole possession of his father's heart, who seemed to forget that he owed his younger children the same education, and the same tenderness. The one being a Knight of Malta, and the other intended for the church, they already carried about them the distinctive marks of their profession, and the unjust sacrifice of their birth-right, which they were forced to make

make to the fortune of the elder. Henrietta d'Alby the daughter, hardly out of her childhood, but sweet tempered, of great sensibility, endowed with a thousand charms and amiable qualities, was destined to bury her youth and beauty in the Abby of Panthemon. As she had been brought up in this convent, she was not enough acquainted with the world to be sensible of the whole weight of the engagements they would have obliged her to enter into: however she obeyed with regret. Neglected, and almost a stranger to her whole family, the unfrequent and short visits of her mother, and of her female relations were spent in representing the necessity of yielding to the will of her father; every day they pressed her more and more, and her misfortune seemed inevitable.

Determined at last to submit to her sad destiny, Mademoiselle d'Alby begged with great earnestness to stay some little time at her father's. She would not enter upon her state of probation till she had obtained this slight favour; she was refused it a long time, but a lucky chance presiding over her fortune, softened the hearts of her parents the moment they were setting off for Chazel: They consented to

car-

carry her thither. This journey in the event prepared her lighter chains, a less austere subjection, and ties formed by the tender sentiments of gratitude and friendship.

Mons. de Monglas, beheld with grief the management of the Count d'Alby, in regard to his children: he could not see without indignation, the cruel and unjust difference, which a father dared to put between creatures entrusted by Providence, and the laws of Society, to his care, under the obligation of the strictest impartiality, which nature herself seems to have planted in the breast of every parent. He knew mankind too well to wonder at their habitual inconsistency; he knew how much their manners and principles were at variance, and that by an odd compound of wisdom and folly, men who are capable of enacting just laws, can at the same time adopt customs in downright violation of them.

Mons. de Monglas observed Mademoiselle d'Alby's deep melancholy; and was much affected with it. The liberty usually allowed in the country giving him frequent opportunities of conversing with her, he discovered great qualities in her, and every

every day his compassion for her increased ; her youth, the graces of her person, the candor of her mind, the noble simplicity of her expressions, the confidence she reposed in him, her respect for her severe parents, whose cruelty drew tears from her eyes, and her modest complaints, every moment augmented the concern which the Marquis began to take in the fortune of an amiable and distressed young lady. The natural sensibility of his temper had often opened his heart to the seducing charms of a passion, which age and continual application to study, made him then little susceptible of ; but if he no longer followed women upon sensual motives, he still loved them ; preferred their friendship to that of his own sex, and laughed at the idle declamations of those four philosophers, who have presumed to call them the quick-sands of wisdom and true happiness.

Tender compassion was not a transient sentiment, still less a fruitless emotion in the generous soul of Mons de Monglas. Whilst he pitied Mademoiselle d'Alby, he considered the means of making her independent and happy : several occurred to his thoughts, yet none but what were attended

tended with difficulty in the execution ; he feared to offend his friend ; the pride of Henrietta's father might stand in the way of his designs ; pride is often an hindrance to beneficence : the Marquis had no relation to propose for her ; as he had been absent so many years, he knew nobody, whose addresses he could promote by such arrangements, as are easily made by the rich and generous. However the season was fast advancing, and Henrietta must soon return to her convent ; as his heart was bent on serving that young lady, Mons. de Monglas at last determined on the only project, which but a little before he thought himself secure he never would have embraced. At first he thought of communicating it to the Count d'Alby, but his delicacy induced him to consult Henrietta : He wanted to be sure of the disposition of her mind, and to undertake nothing without knowing whether she would approve of the scheme. It was so very advantageous to the family, that a violent and tyrannical father might probably use the same authority to connect her with the world, which he had abused in order to have banished her for ever from it.

One

One evening, when the young Henrietta, from a terras that commanded a view of the sea, was admiring the beauty of the setting sun, Mons. de Monglas, after some conversation about indifferent matters, led her to a distance from her mother's women, and speaking low enough to be heard by her alone: may I presume, Mademoiselle, said he, to shew you what a concern I take in your happiness, how much I am affected with your present melancholy situation? I have long thought how to deliver you from a painful restraint, restore you to the world, and to yourself. Why should common opinion, custom, and the laws of decorum, oblige me to propose to you a state of dependance, when I would wish to free you from your present one. The proposal I make, I confess, may not procure you all the pleasures you may promise yourself from a change in your condition, at your age; but it will be attended with these advantages. You will not be obliged to take the vow of an eternal retreat, and you will have the hopes left you of recovering one day your entire liberty.

The countenance of Mademoiselle d'Alby was overspread with blushes; she appeared surprized, amazed, and cast her eyes

eyes on the ground : accustomed to look on her fate as inevitable, she hardly ventured to give her heart up to this first ray of hope. But being pressed to answer, she hesitated, sighed, and with a fearful and faltering accent, do you imagine, Sir, do you, said she, really imagine you shall be able to alter my father's resolution.

Yes, Mademoiselle, replied Mons. de Monglas, if mine do not displease you. My fortune and his friendship assure me of a ready compliance on his part ; I would have asked and should have obtained it, but I was in doubt as to yours. But what do I offer you, my dear Henrietta ? Your cruel destiny reduces you to the choice of two situations : one of these is terrible, the other little satisfactory : a gloomy, an eternal retreat, or the hand of an old man, whose age and temper of mind, keep him at a distance from those vain amusements, which youth is so fond of. Liberty, ease, and peace, are the only advantages in my power to promise or procure you. A small number of men of sense, and decent women, will form your society ; in this narrow but select circle, free to cultivate the gifts you hold from nature, and to enlarge your ideas, you will spend

spend those years which are commonly devoted to pleasures, in fitting yourself for that time of life, when their relish being past, their former votaries find nothing in themselves capable of supplying their loss, or to fill up those moments they once spent in searching after them, in fond expectation, but rarely in the full fruition of them.

I am not acquainted with the pleasures you mention, said Henrietta, but if my father grants me the favour to live in his house, the amusements it affords will be sufficient for my happiness; and if I altered my condition, I should not wish for any other. Very well, Mademoiselle, replied Mons. de Monglas, I may then flatter myself with seeing you happy; it is the most ardent wish of my heart: my conduct will prove to you how disinterested I am. Condescend to direct my measures, to lay your commands upon me: shall I speak Mademoiselle? or shall I leave you time to examine my proposal, to consult yourself, and to determine upon the choice you may think proper to make?

Henrietta's choice was already fixed. Her extreme reluctance to a monastic life, did not allow her to reflect on the age of the

Marquis:

Marquis : her education and innocence shut her eyes to the inconveniencies of so disproportioned an union : and her modest, but decisive answer, assured Mons. de Monglas of her consent and gratitude. That very evening, being called into her father's closet, she there with joy received orders to prepare herself to give her hand to the marquis : the celebration of the intended Marriage was inevitably fixed for the beginning of the ensuing week.

Madam de Terville with two more relations of the Count d'Alby, arrived at Chazel the moment when he was leading his daughter to the chapel of the Chateau *. These ladies surprised and delighted with an event which promised a day of diversion, were very forward to compliment Henrietta, and attended her to the altar. Notwithstanding the difference of their age, Mons. de Monglas and his young spouse made no unbecoming figure in the eyes of the small number of friends, which were present at the ceremony.

The Marquis, who was of a good height, and perfectly well made, added

* The name given to the country-houses of people of quality in France.

to the elegance of his person, the most regular and agreeable features. The evenness of his temper, his simple, uniform and regular way of life, preserved them still in all their beauty. His face did not wear the traces of that premature decay of nature, so early engraven on the countenance of those thoughtless young men, who before they are arrived at the time when they might enjoy life, appear already on the decline of their days. The looks of the Marquis, fixed on the amiable girl who was now become his wife, expressed that pure and lively joy, inspired by the pleasure of obliging. Mademoiselle d'Alby discovered that affecting air which flows from gratitude. This sentiment causes the most delicious sensations in the heart, at that happy age when pride comes not in to stifle it, or when we have not yet learned to lessen the value of favours received, by humbling reflections, or by a rigid scrutiny into the motives of that beneficence which we are become the object of.

Part of the day was spent in gay rural diversions; but towards the evening, a gloomy melancholy overspread the countenance of the young Marchioness. She had been walking out alone, with Madam de

de Neuillant, one of her father's relations, who arrived that morning : this lady was become within six months, the widow of an old officer, infirm, tyrannical, of an amorous disposition, jealous and capricious : she had purchased the fortune she then enjoyed, by eight years loathing, vexation and constraint. More compassionate than prudent, she could not help pitying Madam de Monglas, and discovering an officious commiseration of her future condition. She roused the fear and curiosity of the young bride, and was indiscreet enough to add to the one, by satisfying the other. Her too circumstantial descriptions, alarmed the Marchioness ; all her gay hopes of future happiness vanished in an instant ; a horrid state of subjection, with all its dreadful consequences, continual importunities, unavoidable quarrels, odious suspicions ; no peace, no tranquillity. What a frightful prospect ! Why did not she know this before ! She repented, wept, afflicted herself immoderately : every instant redoubled her terror : Madam d'Alby and Madam de Terville could not remove her fears ; and when they led her to the nuptial chamber, all their efforts to calm her troubled mind, could only draw from her a promise to govern herself, to conceal

conceal her grief, and not offend Mons. de Monglas, by letting him see her fruitless and disobliging regret.

Madam d'Alby was scarce gone out, when Henrietta, forgetting the promise she had just made her, rose precipitately, and hastily throwing on her gown, was preparing to quit the room, the instant Mons. de Monglas entered. She threw herself trembling on a couch ; he sat down by her, looked on her some time in silence, and seeing her paleness, perceiving trouble and fear in her eyes yet moistened with her tears, he took her by the hand, pressed it, kissed it, and in an accent of tenderness and emotion ; take comfort, Madam, said he, take comfort for ever. You shall not purchase by a disagreeable complaisance, the easy situation wherein I have now placed you. In marrying you, I was not urged by the desire of possessing a beautiful young woman, but by the desire of making a valuable one happy. Dismiss your fears, I wave my privilege as husband : your happiness and mine require it. The struggle is doubtless violent. How hard to repress the emotions which this moment raises ! Your charms ! — an acquired right ! — But by yielding to this impulse I should prepare the way to long and

and bitter repentance. At my years, love is accompanied with restlessness, and with pain ! the certainty of not being able to please, carries a cruel reflection to the heart ; distrust walks hand in hand, and frightful jealousy treads upon its heels. Soon tormented, by sad suspicions, we afflict, we offend the object of our love, and the cause of our disquiet ; we make her as unhappy, and more to be pitied than ourselves ! no, my lovely Henrietta, the title of husband, so necessary to give a sanction to my regard for you in the eyes of the world, and to make you partake in my fortune, shall never induce me to trouble the sweet tranquillity of your days. View in your husband, a tender father, an indulgent friend : I have rescued you from oppression and tyranny : look on my house as a sanctuary, where peace and liberty await you ; remember, when you shall come to inhabit it, the disinterested motive which engaged me to make you mistress of it ; be it your care to make it agreeable to yourself and to me ; condescend to strew some flowers on the winter of my life ; treat with kindness a man capable of preferring you to himself ; of sparing you the importunate proofs of tenderness ;

ness; of resisting the powerful impulse of his senses; of extinguishing in your presence, a flame, that glows perhaps with the more ardour, as it draws nearer the period of extinction. Yes, my dear Henrietta, I sacrifice all my desires to you; from this moment, I adopt the sentiments of a father for you, and find myself happy in the consideration that they will make your duty less irksome, your obligations more easy to be discharged, and will for ever remove from both of us the least degree of misunderstanding or dis-taste.

The more Madam de Neuillant's imprudent discourse had alarmed Henrietta, and the more terrible it had made her husband appear, the more agreeable was the surprise, which this speech, so capable of erasing its sad impression, excited.—Tenderness and delight, called forth tears of comfort and joy, which bathed her face and bosom. You, my father! You my friend! You Sir! repeated she, throwing herself into the arms of Mons. de Monglas, and pressing him to her breast with transport: Oh! cried she, may my assiduities, my attentive friendship, my respect my gratitude, convey every moment, into the soul of my gene-

generous friend, all that pleasure with which his goodness has filled mine. Mons. de Monglas spent the remaining part of the night in acquainting the Marchioness with the plan of life he had chalked out for himself. All the amusements consistent with good breeding, decorum, and family happiness, entered into this plan formed for their common felicity. He made her sensible, but with caution and delicacy, how much she ought to fear the exposing to ridicule, a man who, without the allurement of a transient pleasure, without passion, and without interest, had alone entrusted her with the sole power of punishing him for a step, in which esteem and friendship had engaged him.

Madam de Monglas was silent. Her confusion and blushes did not allow her to make any answer; but her expressive looks assured the Marquis she understood him. They parted satisfied with each other, and the contented air of Henrietta next morning, surprized her mother, who was uneasy at the temper she had left her in the evening before. That lady was afraid lest Mons. de Monglas might have had reason to complain of a disinclination discovered so late, or shew his regret for the

the good he had done to the family to which he had allied himself, and repent with sorrow his noble conduct towards an ungrateful woman.

Madam de Monglas gave her a faithful account of what passed the preceding night. The Countess admired the behaviour of the Marquis, and immediately after told it in confidence to Madam de Terville. After a month's stay at Chazel, the new-married couple returned to Paris, and the more Madam de Terville becomes acquainted with her niece's sentiments; the more she finds her delighted with her condition.

From Cecily to Mademoiselle de Canteleu.

YOUR regard for your friend, Mademoiselle, must give you a desire to know the nature of the family, where her happy destiny prepares her a retreat. I will therefore add to this account, written at my return from Chazel, whither I accompanied Madam de Terville, a succinct detail of what may excite your curiosity with regard to two persons, as respectable by their character, as they are distinguished by the advantages of birth and fortune.

If her distance from the world, and her little knowledge of its usages or pleasures, made her stay at Chazel agreeable in the eyes of Mademoiselle d'Alby, accustomed to greater retirement and uniformity; the amusements which she found in her husband's house, appeared very charming in the eyes of Madam de Monglas. The Marquis loved music, and often gave concerts. Assiduous in conforming herself to his taste, the Marchioness sent for masters, and soon attained to a great perfection in the art of mingling the sweet accents of a most

most melodious voice with those of the guittar, and harpsichord. A library consisting of the best authors of every nation in Europe, made her desirous to learn several languages. Here her application filled up part of her time, gave her new ideas, and dispelled all those that might have diminished her happiness, and kept up her joy and tranquillity. The more we occupy the mind, the less we feel the dangerous necessity of finding employment for the heart.

Madam de Monglas, who has been married these two years, lives now as she did in the first moments of her union with the Marquis. She keeps no open house, where people of rank and fortune admit indiscriminately an impertinent croud : her toilette is not frequented by an idle swarm of those useless and unhappy mortals, who in the morning count the tedious hours of the day, complain of their number, and lay out one part of them in contriving to squander the rest.

The Marchioness, who is an early riser, reads till noon ; then she dresses ; at half an hour past one, her apartment is open when her own family, the distant relations of Mons. de Monglas, with some chosen friends of acknowledged merit, are free

to present themselves, and are sure of an agreeable reception. The care of doing the honours of an elegant and cheerful table, moderate play, dramatic representations, with all the little offices of society : all these amusements fill up her time, and make good the promises of M. de Monglas : he had engaged to procure her pleasures of a less turbulent nature : he has called them all round her : her heart knows how to partake in their charms ; and she enjoys them without the least alloy of unpleasing reflections.

In order to form a just idea of her delightful situation, and to conceive her happy state, we must, with the Marchioness de Monglas, preserve in the midst of the world, that innocence, that purity of heart, the true source of the tranquillity of the mind, and that calm disposition which fits us at all times to taste the sweet impressions of joy.

Women though born with sensibility but bred up to moderate their desires would never feel a considerable part of the troubles of life, were friendship only to form their connexion with that violent headstrong sex, who cruelly endeavour to transfuse into our breasts those tumultuous passions themselves are inflamed by. Weak
tende

tender, too sympathizing, whilst we wish to calm these passions, we share them: they destroy our quiet, and our happiness: trouble, uneasiness, sorrow and regret find admittance with them, into our very souls. May their happy destiny preserve the two charming friends, whose peace and tranquillity I ardently wish, from their bad influence.

LETTER XXX.

NO, my lovely Hortensia, nothing can weaken your title to a heart accustomed to love you: What, I neglect you; no longer find time to write to you? Alas! every moment in my own disposal shall be employed in giving you proofs of my constant friendship. Gratitude will, doubtless, attach me to Madam de Monglas; but this just sentiment shall never blot from my memory what I owe to my first friend. You shall never lose that title, and I shall always take a pleasure in preserving it inviolate.

You are in the right to think so: I left the Hotel de Terville with extreme satisfaction. However, the Countess has behaved vastly well to me. The fear of her son's return, and my desire never to see Mons. de Moncenai again, induced me to feign myself indisposed: Cecily obtained leave for me to keep my room. Sunday morning, having walked out, I was told on my return, that Madam de Terville wanted

wanted me : I immediately went to her apartment ; I found her alone with her daughter ; she made me sit down, put on a smiling air, and, in an accent of rillery, chid me for having concealed my birth, my accomplishments, and every thing that distinguished me from that rank in life I had chosen to assume. I blushed, I was afraid to answer ; it neither became me to destroy nor to confirm the favourable impression which Madam de Monglas doubtless imagined she ought to give of one whom she was going to make her companion. Luckily a visit interrupted this embarrassing conversation ; I rose with a design to retire ; the Countess stopped me ; a moment after, the house steward appeared ; I would have left the room ; she took me by the hand, obliged me to follow her, and begged me to take my place at the table, which would have been mine before had I discovered myself. All dinner-time she made me a thousand kind compliments ; she behaved as if she had never seen me before. So many praises lavished on the friend of Madam de Monglas ; so many generous expressions of friendship so long delayed, might indeed have taught

me, had I yet been to learn, how little even we ourselves are concerned in what often procures us the consideration of the world.

The caresses of Madam de Terville had no effect on my sensibility, and I left Madam de Moncenai without any concern, but I regret the loss of Cecily. We parted not without shedding tears; my confidence in her has not met with the like return; and I was apprehensive of appearing indiscreet by pressing her too much on that subject. As I had been made acquainted, by her, with the character of Mons. de Monglas, I was in hopes of a favourable reception, but little thought of meeting with such an one as he was pleased to give me. Indeed, my friend, he did not receive me into his family as a young person who came to implore his assistance, or place herself under his protection, but as a near relation, brought up at a distance, whom he had long wished to see: He did not affect any compassion for me, or make any professions of assisting me; he even seemed afraid to let me see he had been informed of my misfortune. Joy shone on the countenance of his charming wife: They both strove

strove to anticipate my desires; they were attentive to the smallest objects; their kind assiduities have replaced me in the situation in which you left me: All the advantages which I felt the want of, are restored to me: I ought to be easy, contented, happy! but this situation, in appearance so like my former state, is, however, not the same. Oh! my dear, I am altered myself, and so is every thing that concerns me.

'Till the death of Madam d'Auterive, I was wholly unacquainted with sorrow; I had never made one melancholy reflection, nor carried my thoughts forward into an alarming futurity: I imagined myself born to possess, and to preserve the advantages I enjoyed: I knew not that being born poor and abandoned, my very existence exposed me to the necessity of suffering.—Do not accuse me of throwing a cloud over my present happy condition, by the suggestions of a pride I have been so often reproached with: I should detest myself if the favours of two worthy people lowered me but for one moment in my own eyes. Their goodness affects me very deeply; it does not hurt my pride. Believe me, my Hortensia,

tia, my heart is tender, grateful; I feel all the value of the favours they load me with; but sorrow has left such deep traces on my inmost soul; I am grown so uneasy, I am become so ingenuous in afflicting myself; such dark and gloomy ideas do now so feed my melancholy, that I can never hope to recover that placidness and tranquillity which naturally disposes us to look out for amusements, to relish them, or to convert them into pleasure.

Mons. de Germeuil writes me he is returning to Paris: He stops on the road at the seat of a relation, where his mother has promised to spend two or three days. By an odd chance I shall, perhaps, set off for Malzais the very moment when he arrives. This contrariety of our wishes!—But why wish to see him? What have I to say to him? Why am I so sensible on account of this trifling event? I fear it will give him uneasiness. I wrote to him yesterday; I acquainted him with the kindness of Madam de Monglas; but, on reading his letter a second time, one of his expressions made me angry, and made me tear the answer I had begun. Notwithstanding his amiable qualities, and his

his extreme generosity of heart; M. de Germueil is not exempt from some of the faults of his sex: So much impetuosity, so determined a will, so wrong a manner of interpreting my sentiments!—Indeed I could almost complain of him. My friendship alone does not content him; this is the immediate source of a thousand inquietudes, of a continual anxiety to me: Is it possible I should still persist in encouraging it? I will not write to him: he will learn from Pauline where I am; and, being grown quite easy about my fate, possibly he may then give over thinking of me.

My stay at Malzais, will not interrupt our correspondence: I shall have your letters twice a week. Farewell, my dear, we are just going to the concert: Madam de Monglas desires me to take her place at the harpsichord. I am happy in possessing talents she is fond of, and in speaking those languages she studies. How much am I obliged to Madam d'Auterive for the care she took of my education? Every day, every moment recalls her to my heart: In every period of my life I shall cherish and revere the idea of her dear memory. But let us wave for the present,

this

this affecting, this interesting subject; I must seem contented, and I ought to be truly so. Farewel; on my arrival at Malzais, it will be my first care to write to you.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

WHY do you think me severe, my dear friend; why are you afraid of letting me read the secrets of a weak heart? I have refused to confess to you my inclination for Mons. de Germeuil. Refused! how the reproach stings me! I deserve it not. I treated you as a second self, and if my sentiments may be called a tender inclination, without being guilty of a reserve, which were to sin against the laws of friendship, my obstinacy in denying it, is merely the consequence of my self-deception.

Well! and pray why is my courageous resistance to rouse up your spirit to war against your own inclination, and stand candidate for the honours of triumph. To be serious, our situation in the world is too different that my example should be the rule of your conduct. If the loss even of that tedious law-suit were to reduce you to the narrowest circumstances, you would have a number of advantages still left you of which I am deprived. Born of noble parents, allied to illustrious houses,

Ma-

Mademoiselle de Canteleu never can have the same reasons to stifle the inclination of her heart. Open then, that heart to me, my lovely, my dear friend ; and if it is weak, be assured of all the indulgence of mine.

We have been at Malzais these six days ; Mons. and Madam de Monglas were received at this large and beautiful manor as beneficent masters, whose wished-for return brings joy and plenty in their train. They are in hopes, during the remaining part of the summer, to enjoy the sweets of freedom and tranquillity at this agreeable seat : But Madam de Monglas's brothers, the Marchioness d'Alairac, the Count de Montalaire, his daughters, with a great deal more company, are expected to be certainly here towards the end of next month.

An English Gentleman, who is obliged, as I imagine, by his health, to spend part of the year in France, came yesterday to take possession of a pavilion delightfully solitary, and built on purpose for him in the center of four groves of trees, which conceal it from the view of passengers. His name is Lord Lindsey : The Marquis and he have been long acquainted ; they met first at Constantinople, and travelled in

com-

company for eight years. Notwithstanding the difference of their age, a perfect conformity of principle engages them in a sincere friendship. My Lord is much younger than M^{rs}. de Monglas ; his turn of mind is serious, humane, but inclined to melancholy. The usual abode of this stranger, during his stay in France, is at three leagues distance from the Chateau de Malzais. It is a detached seat, and has but little outward appearance ; the gardens are magnificent, and are kept in beautiful order, but no body is admitted into them. It might pass for an uninhabited place, if my Lord's liberality, diffused all round this retreat, did not make the poor sensible of his presence. His humanity makes him beloved and respected, even by those very persons who blame his aversion for society.

If I were much addicted to vanity I should be sufficiently mortified at the impression I made on him. The sight of me raised in him surprize, emotion, and almost terror. These passions were strongly marked, without any mixture of the tender feelings ; on the contrary, he seemed affected with some uneasy sensation on looking at me, and yet he still continued looking at me. Madam de Monglas, who had

never

never before seen this friend of her husband's, was struck with this singularity ; she rallied me the whole evening upon this odd effect of my charms. I do not know how it happens, but I am unaccountably taken with him. I find a strong propensity to esteem this stranger : His noble and majestic air, inspires me with a kind of respect ; I would not be like the person he hates, and still less, call back to his memory afflicting images of the past. Mons. de Monglas has always known him deeply affected with some secret grief and continual melancholy ; but as my Lord seemed to endeavour to conceal it, he never dared to ask him the cause of it.

I have no letter from Mons. de Germeuil ; his silence astonishes me. Pauline writes me word that he is not arrived yet : She says he is hourly expected ; perhaps I ought to answer him, and inform him of the happy change in my condition : my conduct to him is impolite and cruel ; it will give Mons. de Germeuil a right to reproach me ; but he is so accustomed to complain, and to be angry, that if I had written to him, I should not have avoided the quarrel I look to meet. Indeed, I never open his letters without fear ; and my heart beats when I think how much he must

must disapprove of my conduct, and blame the preference I have given to the offers of Madam de Monglas, without examining whether strict decency would permit me to accept of his.

Farewell, my dear, they tell me the post is just going off; I have hardly time to assure you, that I shall never alter in my esteem for you.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

OH, my dear Hortensia, what a dagger has just pierced my heart ! Did you know, was you afraid to acquaint me with the marriage of Mademoiselle de Sauve ? Her mother communicates it to Mons. de Monglas ; Madam de Terville, likewise writes him word of it. Last Monday the contract was signed : The ceremony is to be performed in the country ; the rest I am ignorant of. My sudden oppression would not allow me to attend to the reading of those letters ; at the first words I hastily withdrew out of the Saloon ; I was scarce able to go up stairs and to reach my apartment : all trembling, quite disconcerted, and motionless, without breath, I fell reclined on a sopha, and for some time lost the use of my senses.

Virginia, a girl who attends on me, by chance coming into my room, seeing me pale, my eyes closed, and feeling me cold and senseless, cried out, rung, and called for

for help : in a moment her shrieks gathered a number of people about me. On the noise of this accident my tender friends ran to my assistance : The kind assiduities of Mons. de Monglas, the caresses of the Marchioness, their anxious looks, their affectionate questions, moved me very sensibly ; my tears at last found vent ; the company treated the fainting fit they had seen me in, as the effect of vapours, occasioned by a long scene of trouble ; and the profusion of my tears appeared to be the consequence and the conclusion of that fit of melancholy.

Madam de Monglas had me put to bed ; to please her I staid there all the evening : It is now midnight ; she has just left me ; I have sent away Virginia ; I am now risen without noise, and write to you ; I have much need to impart to your bosom the insupportable grief which now rends my own.

But whence proceeds my anxiety ? What unreasonable sentiment draws these bitter tears from me ? Have I not always considered Mademoiselle de Sauve as the destined wife of Mons. de Germeuil ? — But how, why does he conceal his marriage from me ? I have so often conjured him to

to obey his mother!—Oh! he should not have repeated, sworn to me in all his letters, that he never would, no, never consent.—He! my dear, He deceive me!—so near being another's; could he give me such strong assurances of his tenderness, beseech me with so much ardour to approve his designs; to partake in his wishes, in his love!—Oh, good God! if I had been so seduced by his fair offers, or vain enough to indulge myself in such flattering hopes!—But, indeed, it is a comfortable reflection not to have given way to a foolish confidence; or if one should have been so weak, at least, to hide one's shame from the world, and blush inwardly.

But what interest can Mons^r de Monglas take in this event? Does he know the Marquis de Germeuil? Is Mademoiselle de Sauve his relation by blood or marriage? These letters overjoyed him. Should I be so unfortunate as to see the Marquis de Germeuil arrive here!—But, now I recollect, the day when I informed Madam de Monglas of my sad adventure, she congratulated herself on not being intimately connected with any of the heirs of Madam d'Auterive: perhaps some body else is going

ing to marry Mademoiselle de Sauve.—
 O my dear, should I be so happy!—Oh, Hortensia, whither do my thoughts wander? But what advantage could I promise myself from Mademoiselle de Sauve's marrying some friend of Mons. de Monglas? Is the sorrow which oppresses me excited by an unjust jealousy? Have I indulged myself in a wish to enjoy the possession destined for Mademoiselle de Sauve, when I have refused it myself? Shall I be mean enough to envy it her? Oh! let her possess the Marquis, and may joys and pleasures be the lot of the happy companion of the Mons. de Germeuil! may delight, may felicity mark every moment of their lives!—No, I did not believe him capable of this useless, this blame-worthy dissimulation: Why those reiterated entreaties to quit the Hotel de Terville, to retire into the country, or go into a convent? Oh, what is it to him where my unfortunate days run out, or where I terminate a disconsolate, troubled, and wretched existence.

But I give way to my grief; my eyes, fatigued and heavy, force me to lay down my pen. I will try to compose myself, to become mistress of my reason, that I may give

give no more uneasiness to those friends
who honour me with so true an affection.
Farewell, my dear, may you never under-
go the torments which a state of uncertain-
ty throws us into, or the still greater of a-
wakening to a certainty of evil.

L E T-

LETTER XXXIII.

EVERY thing clears up, my dear; it is not Mons. de Germeuil, it is—I can scarcely yet persuade myself; it is the Marquis de Terville who marries Mademoiselle de Sauve. Before she gave a positive answer, Madam de Sauve insisted that the young Marquis should purchase a place at court. There fell out a very suitable one to be sold. Mons. de Monglas asked the refusal of it, and was so good as to lend the Countess de Terville part of the sum necessary for the purchase of it. This loan was the important service which made Madam de Monglas so sure of her aunt's compliance, when she was pleased to ask me of her.

I blush at my suspicions; I am ashamed of my weakness; and still more so of my injustice. I repent that I communicated to you my false conjectures. Could I possibly think so ill of Mons. de Germeuil? forget in an instant his noble frankness, the amiable candor of his soul. A heart like his, can it dissemble? Alas! his at-

tachment for me is but too sincere, too tender, too constant! whither will this inclination carry him, fatal to his quiet, to his happiness? He has rejected that alliance, so much desired by his mother, and by all the relations of Mademoiselle de Sauve.—Oh, my God, if that mother enraged at him!—Hortensia, his very declaration of love afflicts me: his passion makes me the disposer of his fate, and I in return can bring him nothing but inconvenience, or grief.

Ingenious in tormenting myself, I perhaps give way to frivolous fears. Since my coming to Malzais, Mons. de Germeuil has never wrote to me. Pauline has been several times at the hotel de Terville, without finding any letters for me. Who employs his thoughts so much in the country?—He begins to neglect me; his reason, doubtless, bids him forget me, renounce his projects, and overcome a passion so contrary to his peace of mind. Well! why should he preserve it, whilst I myself endeavour to destroy it; whilst honour engages me to use a thousand efforts to make him forget me?

Madam de Monglas has received your letter with an extreme sensibility; you will find

find by her obliging answer, how well she remembers her first affections. I every day discover new qualities in her ; she grows very dear to me, and Mons. de Monglas inspires me with that respect, that tender and filial veneration which I once felt for Madam d'Auterive. Pleasure and liberty reign here ; the easy clearfulness of the master and mistress is diffused over all who surround them : they delight in making others happy, and fortune has supplied them with the power of indulging so noble a disposition.

You desire to know whether Lord Lindsey still continues uneasy at seeing me. No, on the contrary he appears very much pleased with my company. I often meet him in my morning walks ; his conversation is amusing and engaging ; I hope to improve by his extensive knowledge, in order to complete that course of study into which Madam d'Auterive had initiated me.

I cannot conceive how that nobleman destined by his birth and by his distinguishing talents, to fill the highest posts in his country, came to embrace a voluntary banishment, and still continues to make but unfrequent and short journeys thither ; he

is twenty years younger than Mons. de Monglas, and is master of an immense fortune ; his person is graceful and noble ; he possesses every advantage one can covet, or envy. What then is it that can afflict him ? Do not figure to yourself that Lord Lindsey is either gloomy, or unsociable : if he flies from society, it is without hating it, and without losing any of those accomplishments that are derived from it. Madam de Monglas, somewhat prepossessed against a nation unhappily too often at war with our own, is surprised to see this nobleman so attentive to entertain and amuse her, and to find him totally devoid of all those ridiculous prejudices which give birth to so many false ideas, and so much real antipathy. It is easy to perceive that he is not happy ; but his extreme politeness, his wit, his complaisance, render his melancholy interesting ; it inspires every body with a desire to divert him from it, while it is so tempered as not to throw the least gloom over the company.

Mons. de Monglas diverts himself with making him guess, whether I am English or Italian ; he gives into the jest, but certainly I do not speak these two languages well enough to raise any doubt in him, not-

notwithstanding he complaisantly affects one.

By delaying the confidence you promised to repose in me, you redouble my uneasiness. In spite of these austere maxims, which you seem to reproach me with, be well assured, my dear Hortensia, that my heart will share every sentiment of yours.

LETTER XXXIV.

WHAT! my tender friend, could you conceal so long from me the secret of your heart? You dreaded my superior judgment. I should have very little, if I were capable of heightening your sorrows by useless remonstrances. I conceive your difficulties; I feel them I pity you, and weep with you. But is there no way to soften matters, to alter this perplexing and disagreeable situation of affairs. Is it impossible to bring about a compromise? Have you never thought of it? Is there no way of subduing your cousin's obstinacy, and the positive humour of the old Count de Melville? Do you know no body whose credit, address or friendship is able to conciliate their minds and unite their affections.

But pray how long has the Marquis de Melville been at Roan? Where did you see him? At whose house did you begin this fatal acquaintance? How came he to be so often in your company, and to inspire you with so warm a regard? With so many assurances of his esteem, have you none

none of a more pleasing distinction? You are not beloved! Who you, my dear! I can hardly persuade myself of it.

If you do not flatter Mons. de Melville; if he is such as you represent him, he cannot be insensible to charms and qualities so capable of affecting a man who thinks. Why does he pursue you? Why does he always seek you out? He says nothing to you; he casts his eyes on the ground; he dares not approach you; he seems to fear you? and you suspect that he hates you? He may fear you my dear, but surely he does not hate you. The present circumstances render his conduct natural enough. As you have both the same claim to the estate in litigation, he must look on you as an enemy. Your every wish is in appearance to deprive him of his fortune. How should he penetrate to the bottom of your heart? One of the two must inevitably ruin the other; sad and cruel dilemma! how disagreeable it is to derive ones hope of happiness from the ruin of a person, whose interest we prefer to our own advantage.

But why should you not avail yourself of the vacation time to employ the mediation of a friend? Doubtless it is not fitting you should seem to wish for a compromise, since

your union with Mons. de Melville, can alone promote it; I approve your delicacy. How uneasy is your situation! how it moves me! how it pierces my heart!— Alas! whither has the time fled, the happy time, when we were wholly unacquainted with these continual vexations; when every day promised us amusements and pleasure; when all our hours passed over unmarked by fears, fruitless desires, or gloomy reflections.

Let me place before your eyes the motives of consolation I should adopt in the same circumstances? On a supposition you should lose your law-suit, the fortune now under litigation will be adjudged to him, whom you now fear to deprive of it; would not this be a mitigation of your misfortune? But if the decision is favourable, what joy will it be to offer to partake it with him. His father's anger is a transient sentiment, excited by interest, which you need not fear. The Count only desires to secure to his son those lands which you claim; it will be indifferent to him, whether he obtains them by a decree of the court, or by a junction of your hands. Do not suffer yourself to be cast down, pluck up your spirits, the issue is uncertain, and perhaps may be an happy one. May it

answer

answer all the wishes of the affectionate and generous soul of my dear friend.

I cannot answer your questions in regard to Mons. de Germeuil; he has not written to me. I confess, his silence astonishes me. It was my duty to wish, and perhaps I was really desirous not to occupy his thoughts so much, but I never could endure to reflect without uneasiness, at being entirely forgotten by him: I imagined that a friendship congenial with our reason—I will not examine the conduct of the Marquis de Germeuil: possibly he may complain of mine; possibly too, he may not have observed my want of punctuality. And, why should he think of me; why should he entertain a fruitless passion? What pleasure can it afford him? Can the infrequent and reserved assurances of my esteem, give him any comfort, or find a place amongst so many dissipations and pleasures, to which his youth, rank and fortune intitle him? The mind must be in a state of sadness; must itself stand in need of comfort, before we can experience any satisfaction in receiving letters from a friend, and in reading them over a thousand times with sympathetic feelings, and emotions. I should be very cruel indeed were I to

wish Mons^r. de Germéuil, in such a situation of mind, as to render him incapable of tasting more satisfactory enjoyments.

No, I have not altered my idea of Lord Lindsey. He is always extremely obliging to me ; the more his heart opens, the more his temper is known, the more worthy we find him to inspire a solid and lasting friendship. He amuses himself with instructing me in the properties of plants. This study fills up those hours of the morning, which Madam de Monglas dedicates to her household cares. Farewell, my dear ; I say with you, why are we separated ? There are moments when we could wish to mingle our tears.

L E T^r.

LETTER XXXV.

NO, my dear, never shall I recover that internal peace, which made me so happy during the life of Madam d'Auterive: every thing seemed to promise it me here, but my hopes are vanished: I begin to fear angering and displeasing my obliging friends, by shewing how far I am from relishing the schemes they have adopted for my advantage; how impossible it will be to fall in with their notions, and to place my felicity, in that splendid rank, which they have in view and are projecting for me.

For some days past, Lord Linsey is become the subject of a constant altercation, between Madam de Monglas and me: railing makes the dispute still supportable, but our opinions are so contrary, and our views so different, that the sweetness of our correspondence may become gradually altered by it:

Mons. de Monglas, by obstinately declining to discover my country, has very naturally railed his friend's curiosity in regard to the place of my nativity, and the

Marchioness diverts herself with increasing it, by giving him a kind of hint of the singularity of my fortune: at present she ascribes a particular motive for the inquisitiveness she has given birth to: she attributes to a very warm concern, his simple desire of diving into a mystery; perhaps that of discovering a country-woman, in the young person, whom the partiality of her friends represents as worthy of his esteem.

His assiduity, his complaisance for me, are the objects of our whole conversation, and of a thousand perplexing suppositions. The active friendship of Madam de Monglas fills her imagination with the most pleasing images; she is incessantly talking to me of rank and fortune; she chides me very seriously, for listening to her with indifference, and I see how I should be blamed if such fantastic ideas had any real foundation: would they forgive me the refusing such weighty advantages, when they even blame me for not desiring them?

I reproach myself for want of confidence, sincerity, and justice: I could have wished my heart had been more open with Madam de Monglas. When I acquainted her with my forlorn situation, I did not intend at first to disguise any thing from her; but I know not what secret confusion suppressed

suppressed the name of M. de Germeuil on my lips; ought not I to have distinguished him from those whose unfeeling behaviour I experienced? Why be silent on the nobleness of his character? Why not speak of his generous offers? If the fear of appearing either too vain, or too credulous, obliged me to keep silence as to his intentions, should I have concealed likewise his assiduities, his friendship, his repeated endeavours to make me accept of his presents? How could I be so ungrateful as to be ashamed of his goodness, or not dare to avow it?

This imprudent reserve leaves me without an answer, and without any reasonable objection to these notions of Madam de Monglas; it would make my conduct appear very strange in her sight, if any proposal from Lord Lindsey should oblige me to declare my sentiments. Can titles and riches dazzle me? Oh, my dear, that hand which Mons. de Germeuil has deigned to ask, shall never be given to any man I have promised to live unengaged; neither fortune nor grandeur shall make me break that voluntary promise: Alas what are all the riches in the world, if we do not desire them?

A mode-

A moderate share of those envied riches, would be sufficient to gratify the wishes of my heart. It is long since I have determined on the state I would wish to live in. I cannot put my scheme in execution without assistance ; I once hoped to obtain it from the goodness of Madam de Monglas : Being an hundred times on the point of communicating my designs to her, I was deterred by her known aversion to a convent : I feared her remonstrances, and even her reproaches ; to desire to leave her, were it not to repay with ingratitude all her solicitude to make me happy ?

The little debate, which my Lord Lindsey occasions between the Marchioness and myself, does not in the least alter my first friendship : the conduct of that worthy man, gives no signs of the change they imagine they observe in him ; his melancholy is not diminished ; sighs often escape from him, and sometimes I see the tears ready to fall from his eyes ; it is true, he pays me the most attentive affection ; but his conduct is equal, and without emotion or passion ; I could call it, my dear, a paternal affection, if I understood the force and extent of a sentiment, which my misfortune has condemned me never to inspire.

You

You beg me to talk to you of myself alone, never to recal to your memory the confidence you have reposed in me, you wish never to mention Mons. de Melville any more. By laying yourself under this restraint, do you imagine you can banish him from your heart? Believe me, my good friend, it is difficult, and even impossible to blot out a pleasing impression: we may keep our sentiments to ourselves, but to destroy them, the very attempt to do it—Oh! it is a very cruel, and a very useless endeavour.

LETTER XXXVI.

Ten at night.

THE profound calm that reigns around, invites me in vain to taste the sweets of sleep which closes every eye in this beautiful and peaceful abode : why am I the only one, whom vexation, and uneasiness keep awake ? why cannot I partake of that rest, which universal nature seems to enjoy.

Oh ! my dear, my own imprudence throws me into bitter regret. Could you have thought it ? Mons. de Germeuil dares to abuse the regard I imagined I owed to the nephew of Madam d'Auterive : for a long time past, his complaints afflict, and his reproaches hurt me. — Once indeed, he says, he kept within bounds ; he avoided to displease and offend me ; but now my cruelty will no longer suffer him to constrain himself, and certainly he does not : he breaks out into passion, he threatens, he gives himself up to the greatest impetuosity. — How his temper is altered !

I de-

I deserved the mortification I meet with; a too fond lover of myself, made me fear to lose the friendship of Mons. de Germeuil, and induced me to keep up a commerce I ought to have ended: it was not interest that seduced, nor ambition that dazzled me; I have refused very advantageous offers, and could not forego the pleasure of a dangerous correspondence. Oh! would I had never written to Mons. de Germeuil.

Through the blunder of a Valet, his letter dated from Bayeux remained for twelve days at the hotel de Terville; If I were to send you, and were you to read that letter.—He desired to obey me, he says, and to forget me! to obtain this victory of his reason, to accustom his heart no longer to cherish sentiments, which I take a pleasure in making so tormenting: this painful, this fruitless attempt, warns him to make no more; born to adore me, he will not live without me, nor will ever renounce me. He will see me, he will speak to me. I shall not deprive him of a pleasure so long wished for. He returns to all his old schemes, which I have so often rejected. If I persist in living at Madam de Moncenai's, he will come there to me; he will let her know his

his love for an ungrateful woman, he will no longer conceal his designs ; he himself will acquaint his mother, his relations, and friends with them : he foresees the consequences of such an eclat, but he views them without emotion. By a voluntary renunciation of that part of the fortune, which I intended to preserve for him, he will dispel my vain apprehensions ; I shall no longer keep him in a cruel uncertainty. What objections can I make, after his sentiments are publicly known ? After so many proofs of my tender, my generous friendship, he would blush to think for one moment that his happiness gives me no concern ; that I am not disposed to accomplish the wishes of a man whose most ardent desire is to diffuse happiness over my life, to owe his felicity to me, and to be eternally employed in promoting mine.

In a cruel uncertainty, how the expression surprises me ! — Have I, my Hortensia, kept Mons. de Germeuil in uncertainty ? He would blush to think.—I ought to be disposed.—What does he presume to think ? Oh ! my dear, I find I am humbled ; I can never forgive myself.—I blush inwardly.—And yet, what can I reproach myself with ?

Four in the morning.

I strive in vain to calm myself: my imagination wanders over a thousand melancholy objects. I resume my pen, it is some ease to my heart to pour forth its troubles into yours. Oh! you are quite in the right, my dear, to conceal very carefully, from Mons^t de Melville, the emotion which his presence throws you into: the men abuse our sincerity, our complaisance, and our friendship. What right has Mons^t de Germeuil over me? How comes he to suppose that by declaring his intentions, he will remove all the obstacles I oppose to his desires? Does this generous friendship subject me to his laws, make me the slave to his will? He fears not the consequences of the discovery he threatens me with: imprudent man! he neither sees, nor considers any thing but himself. Could he form the cruel design of banishing me from the hotel de Terville; of exposing me to the resentment of his mother, and in my distress, of leaving me naught but the humbling resourse of living on his favours, or daring by a bold and rash step, to assume the title of Marchioness de Germeuil, with the reputation of an interested girl, ungrateful

grateful enough to carry sorrow into a house, in which she saw herself cherished, to forget that Madam d'Auterive brought her up, and gave her principles capable of making her ever revere all who had any connection with her, and every object that may recal her to her thoughts.

My God, how should I have been terrified on receiving that letter at the hotel de Terville! to dread every moment to see Mons. de Germeuil entering Madam de Moncenai's closet, to hear him claim me, as belonging to him, as an unconstant capricious young woman, who wanted to withdraw herself from that sway which she herself had given him over her. How could I have answered such a violent, passionate letter? — Oh, it is he himself, who treats me with so much harshness.—It matters not, I will not break the law I have imposed on myself; I will hold my peace; I will not wilfully disoblige the nephew of Madam d'Auterive; an eternal silence shall prove to him that my design is not to keep him in a cruel uncertainty.

Seven in the morning.

I have been reading this strange letter over again, and perhaps with too much indulgence.

dulgence. Mons. de Germeuil's impetuosity vexes me, but his sentiments move me, and his intentions inspire me with gratitude. If our fortunes were equal, his passionate expressions, his vivacity, his ardour, would seem more adapted to persuade, than to anger me. But so many unfortunate circumstances keep us asunder; he has so many advantages over me!—But this very circumstance seems to require more delicacy, in his conduct to me? Ought he to have threatened me with a discovery, have given me up to the reproaches of my heart? Can I support the idea of seeing him flatter himself—What! can the assurances of an innocent friendship induce him to believe.—He thinks me disposed.—Does He, my dear, does He tell me so?—But I abuse your goodness; my long sorrowful letters fatigue you. Pardon me the irksomeness they give you. Your kind complaisance has too much accustomed me to seek for consolation by writing to you. Have you not vexations enough of your own. How can I be so unjust as to compel you to partake in mine.

L E T-

LETTER XXXVII.

WITH what a pleasing joy do you fill my heart! What, my dear, that worthy magistrate whom your cousin designed for your husband, the innocent cause of your disputes with her, is actually in the confidence of Mons. de Melville? He is your friend! I admire his noble disinterestedness. Well, my dear Hortensia, you must acknowledge at last, how little justice you did yourself, in doubting the affection of your lover. The influence of the President d'Arclai over the mind of the Count de Melville, will shortly put an end to that long procedure, by an easy accommodation, and the union of the two heirs, is so proper, that your heart may safely indulge the charms of hopes.

If I answer the tender article which concludes your letter. I fear to anger you: I fear still more to blend a sentiment of grief with those pleasing emotions that must affect you: but, can I dissemble the true dispositions of my soul, or encourage you in a deceitful expectation. Oh, my dear, when I promised you to live with you, to accept

accept a retreat with you, it was at the abbey of Pantheon, where you proposed we should retire together; circumstances are no longer the same; pardon me, if I tell you that at present it is impossible for me to fulfill that engagement, which you mention to me with so much zeal and goodness.

The situation of my mind removes me more than ever from this brilliant society, with which I have no sort of tie. Does the condition I am in answer to my fortune? This borrowed lustre draws people's eyes too much on me, raises too much curiosity; my every taste, desire, or inclination, lead towards solitude. You will not be happy, till you receive from my hand the confirmation of my promise. Oh! allow me to persuade myself you will be happy by the certainty of making me so, fixing my situation, rendering me independent, and banishing for ever all fear and uneasiness from the heart of your friend.

If the success of Mons. d'Arclai's assiduities answer his wishes, before the Marquis de Melville becomes master of your fortune, I will presume to ask, and to hope a favour from you.— Your sensible heart will possibly be moved in granting it me. I will beg of you, my dear, to procure me admittance into that convent, where ever

since

since the death of Madam d'Auterive, I wish to dedicate my days, in seeking that peace, that calm which I cannot recover in the world. Be not cast down, my lovely Hortensia, be not hurt with my resolution; I have not taken it precipitately: if you impartially examine all the motives which determine me to form this design, you will agree, that both my condition and reflections ought naturally to inspire me with the desire of an eternal retreat; but I will not dwell on that subject, it will be time enough to resume it after your interesting affairs are ended.

You do not think me indulgent enough to Mons. de Germeuil: you pity him; alas! so do I. I have received three letters from him, they are very different from the first: he conjures me to forgive him those expressions fallen from him in the bitterness of his heart; he begs, he urges, he implores my goodness; my silence drives him to despair; on his knees he requests one line, one single line from my hand. But how can I write even that one line, without drawing on me new reproaches, or exposing myself to new solicitations? I would not wish to give him hopes, I would not wish to afflict him.—How affecting are his last letters! what sighs, what tears have they

they cost me!—There are moments in which those tears flow spontaneously; when I am pleased in shedding them; when the passionate sentiments of Mons. de Germeuil charm all the torments of my soul; when I perceive it expand itself to I know not what sad but affecting pleasure: its soothing impression removes for a time the remembrance of the causes of our separation. Oh, my dear, birth and riches are great, are real advantages! If I possessed them, how easy it would be for me to write to Mons. de Germeuil?

I have this moment received a note from Pauline; it gives me extreme uneasiness. She informs me that Mons. de Germeuil must be by this time at a friend's house, about eight or ten leagues from Malzais: he mentions nothing of it; why this mysteriousness? Can it be his intention to come here? would he expose me to a surprize, and to the confusion, which the sight of him, and the secrecy I have observed, in regard to our connections, must throw me into? O never could his arrival in the neighbourhood of Malzais more alarm me! It is whispered about, amongst the people of fashion here that Lord Lindsey is going to marry the ward of Mons. de Monglas. By giving me that name, the Marquis has raised

raised such an opinion of my fortune, as to attract the notice of a lady, who wants to marry her son. On the first overture of her proposal, Madam de Monglas, being unwilling to enter into any particulars, told her I was engaged, and was satisfied with my guardian's choice. Doubtless, his Lordship's assiduities must have awakened the suspicions of that lady, and as she is fond of seeming to know all that passes round her estate, she must have given her conjectures as real matter of fact.

Good God, if this rumour should come to the ears of Mons. de Germeuil? if he imagined but for a moment.—Oh! I could never bear to raise a jealous emotion in his heart. What! deliver him over to the dreadful torments I felt? What tears, what groans, must it cost him! His bosom would be rent by those pointed stings, which the idea of his marriage with Mademoiselle de Sauve—This confession surprises you, my dear; you have often reproached me with concealing my sentiments: but be well assured that when I concealed my sentiments from you, it was because I knew them not. In the space of one night only, my cruel pangs taught me to distinguish from friendship, those tumultuous agitations to which its milder affection

fection is a stranger : I discovered at the bottom of my soul, that dangerous, that violent passion, whose force and effects you have so often described to me. While I reproach myself with my own weakness, why should I dissemble it to you. Far, far from me be all affectation, all voluntary reserve. Mons. de Germeuil is dear to me ; I love, I will love him all my life. I dare tell it to my indulgent friend, and perhaps, one day, I may dare still more. When the sacred and indissoluble bonds of religion shall free me from the fear of ever yielding to the prayers of Mons. de Germeuil ; I will tell him, yes, I will tell him then, it is not an ungrateful an inflexible girl, whom you love ; but an unfortunate one, whose sensible and tender heart sympathized in all your sentiments, your wishes, and your desires ! Do not pity her, because she leaves the world, because she renounces all the goods of fortune, and every "pleasure of life ; but pity her because she could not make you happy !

LETTER XXXVIII.

Adam de Monglas has just made me a very astonishing request. I can hardly recover the uneasiness it gives me. Reasons, she tells me of a very forcible nature, induce Mons. de Monglas to ask my leave to inform Lord Lindsey of all that concerns myself. He does not require this complaisance of me, he only earnestly wishes it; he will be grateful for this proof of my esteem for a friend whom the most tender concern alone engages to wish to be acquainted with my story. That he may be the more thoroughly informed, they wish to read to him the little packet of Madam d'Auterive, and even the extract of the letters to Mr. Smith.

Will my situation in regard to Mons. and Madam de Monglas, allow me to oppose their desires? To ask, my dear, is in reality to require it. Ever ready to satisfy the Marquis, I have sent an express to Paris; he conveys my keys to Pauline, with an order to carry these papers to the Hotel de Monglas, and to deliver them to him.

But

But why should Mons. de Monglas desire to entrust to his friend the sad particulars which regard me ? Why expose to his view misfortunes foreign to him, and an adventure rather horrible than interesting ? Why unveil my condition, and my distress, to render me the object of his compassion, and convert his pity into esteem and regard ? What empty pride still troubles my afflicted heart ? How can I be affected by the consequences of this confidence ? I might blush at being poor and unknown, when being informed of Madam d'Auterive's intentions with regard to myself, and her amiable nephew, I looked on my fate as an unsurmountable barrier between Mons. de Geimeuil and myself. Oh ! but for him ; but for his love ; less sensible to misfortune, more reasonable, more submissive to the decrees of providence, I should have borne, without murmuring, and perhaps without grief, the humble condition to which I was reduced : but how could I avoid lamenting it, since it placed me at such a distance from him ; since it forced me to conceal from him all the sentiments of a heart—I am interupted.—It is a letter from you.—You surprise me, my dear Hortensia ; you give me the most exquisite

quisite uneasiness. Mons. d'Arclai, you tell me, just set off for the Chateau de Melville; his first letter will let you know the success of his negotiation; and you expect, without any great impatience, so important a piece of news? Your dearest hope is vanished, and your ideas of happiness are at present confined within too narrow a compass to satisfy your heart.

Oh, good God! my dear friend, whence arises this indifference; so sudden, so strange, so little natural, on an occasion which is to decide interests of such high concern? I dare not form conjectures on a change wherein I discover neither your usual character nor sentiments. After so long a silence, why does my dear friend write to me with a premeditated design not to be understood? The oftener I read that short, and peevish letter, the less am I able to conceive.—In the name of that sincere and tender friendship which always united our hearts and minds, which is become the only consolation of my life; explain to me the cause of this proceeding; it afflicts me more than I can possibly express.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



